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#2

I HEART SKULL CRUSHER!



Zonno23

I HEART SKULL-CRUSHER!

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I COMMENCE THIS FIRST MEETING OF TRINI'S SCREAMING PAIN BALL TEAM-A-PALOOZA!

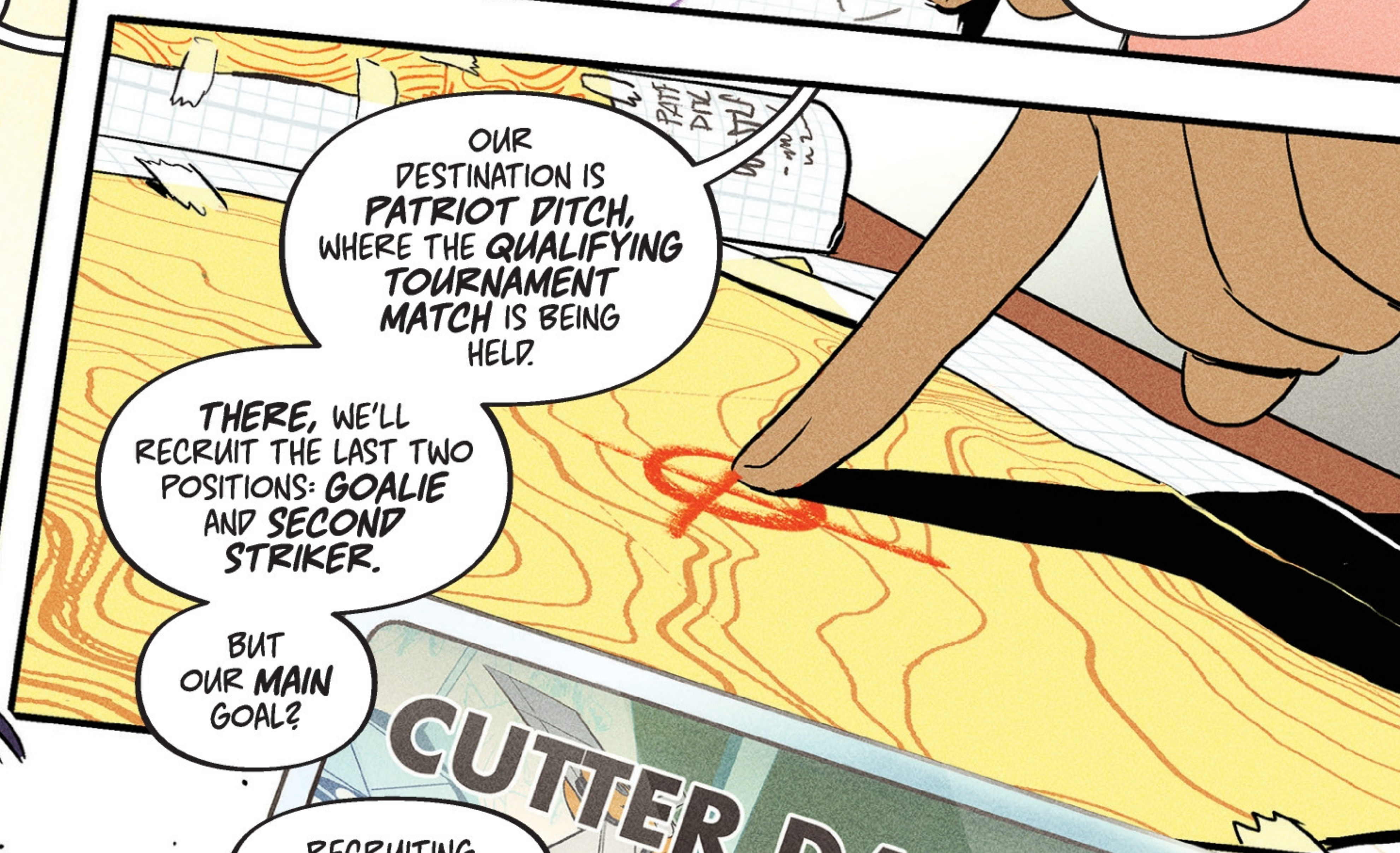
WE'RE NOT CALLING OURSELVES THAT.

UNTIE ME!



I'VE ASSIGNED US ROLES. YOU TWO ARE DEFENSE. I'M FORWARD STRIKER. COACH IS COACH.

LET ME GOOOO!



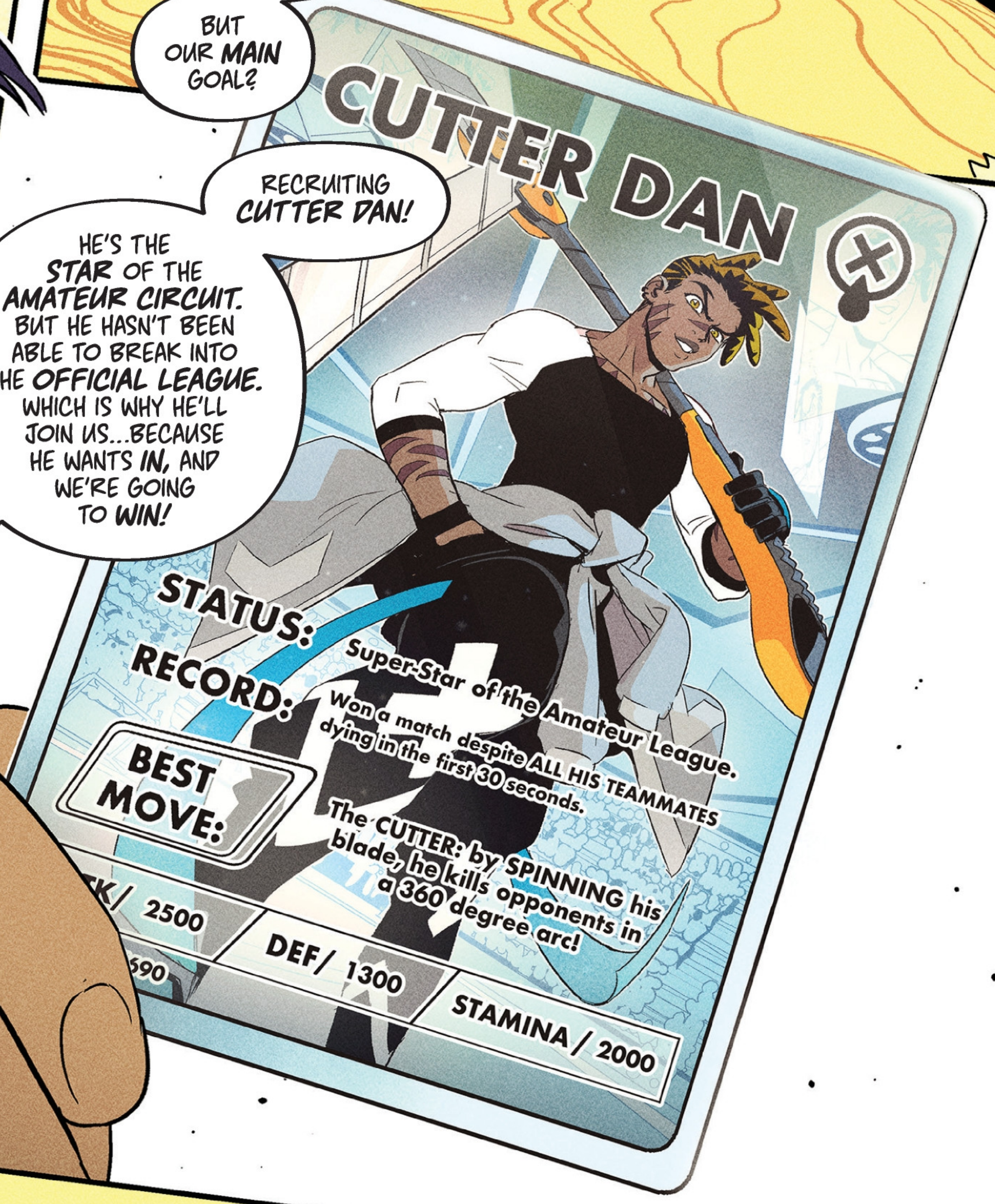
OUR DESTINATION IS PATRIOT DITCH, WHERE THE QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT MATCH IS BEING HELD.

THERE, WE'LL RECRUIT THE LAST TWO POSITIONS: GOALIE AND SECOND STRIKER.

BUT OUR MAIN GOAL?

HE'S THE STAR OF THE AMATEUR CIRCUIT. BUT HE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO BREAK INTO THE OFFICIAL LEAGUE. WHICH IS WHY HE'LL JOIN US...BECAUSE HE WANTS IN, AND WE'RE GOING TO WIN!

RECRUITING CUTTER DAN!



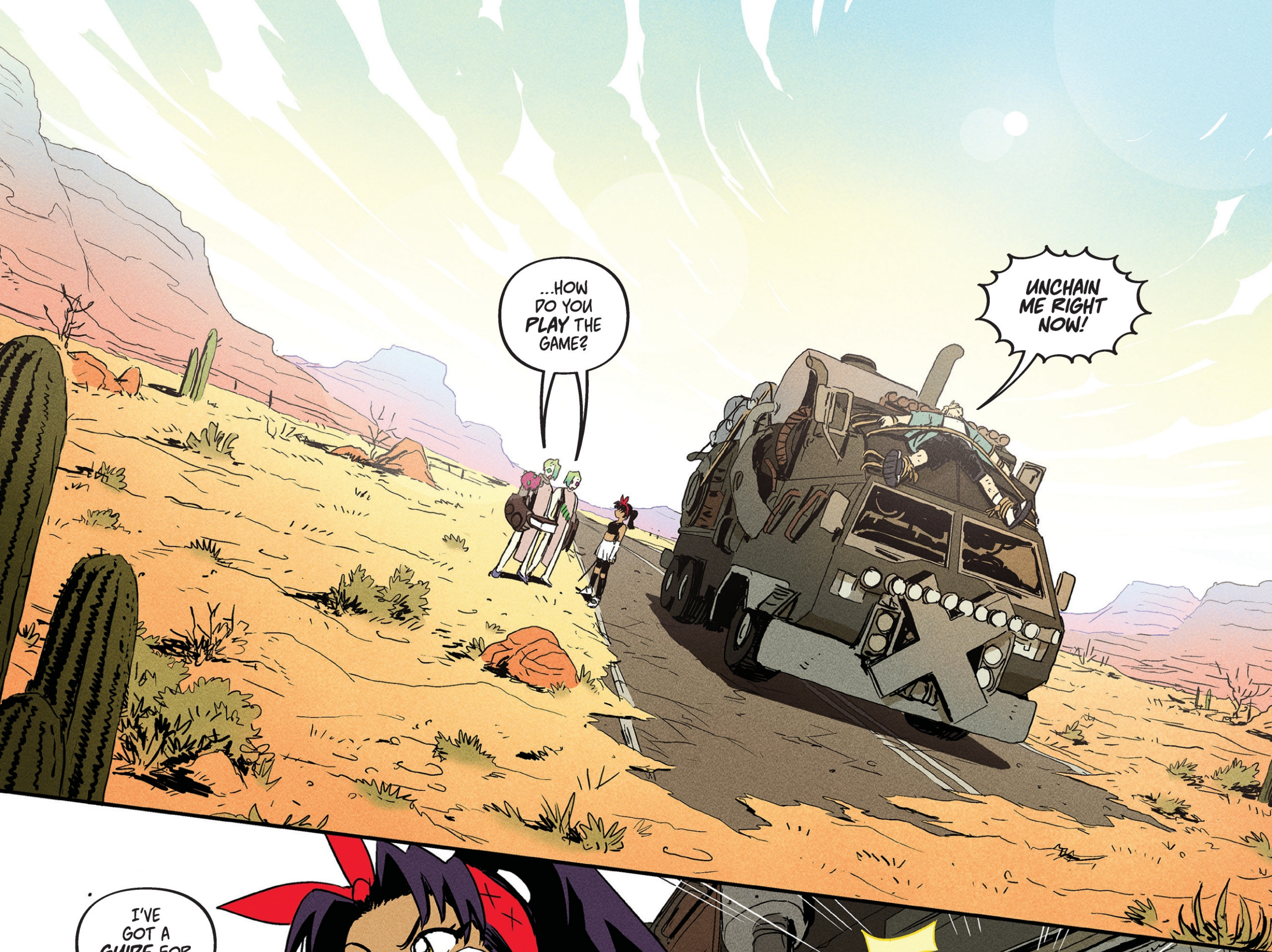
STATUS:
RECORD: Super-Star of the Amateur League. Won a match despite ALL HIS TEAMMATES dying in the first 30 seconds.
BEST MOVE: The CUTTER: by SPINNING his blade, he kills opponents in a 360 degree arc!

ATK / 2500
DEF / 1300
STAMINA / 2000



I'VE COMPILED ALL RELEVANT INFO INTO THESE GUIDEBOOKS. ANY QUESTIONS?

YEAH...



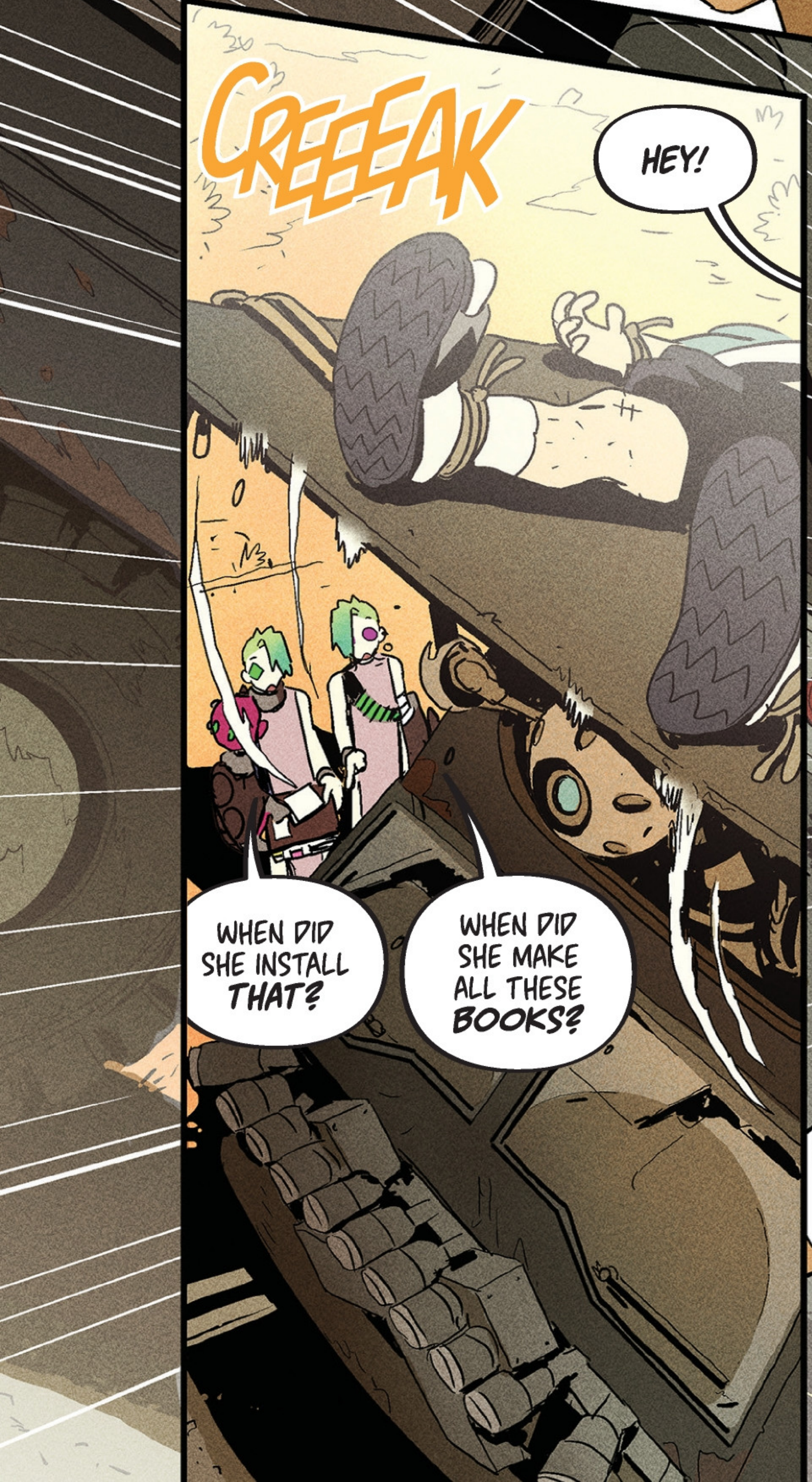
...HOW DO YOU PLAY THE GAME?

UNCHAIN ME RIGHT NOW!



I'VE GOT A GUIDE FOR THAT!

THUMP



CREEEAK

HEY!

I HATE THIS, FOR THE RECORD!

THE RULES ARE SIMPLE: USING ONLY YOUR LOWER BODY, MOVE THE BALL FROM YOUR SIDE INTO THE GOAL ON YOUR OPPONENTS' SIDE.



WHEN DID SHE INSTALL THAT?

WHEN DID SHE MAKE ALL THESE BOOKS?

EVERY PLAYER IS ARMED. EVERY GOAL IS LOCATED INSIDE THE GOALIE SQUARE.

THE GOALIES CAN'T LEAVE THE SQUARE, BUT THEY CAN MURDER ANYONE WHO ENTERS!

GETTING THE BALL INTO THE GOALIE SQUARE WITHOUT DYING EARNS YOU **THREE POINTS**. GETTING IT **THROUGH** THE GOAL GETS YOU **FIVE**.

MURDER AN OPPOSING PLAYER WITH THE BALL, YOU GET **ONE POINT**.

POINTS SYSTEM

+1

+5

+3

SO MURDER EVERYONE. EASY.

NO!

+2 BUT NOT FOR YOU

"IF YOU MURDER A PLAYER WHO DOES NOT HAVE THE BALL, THE OTHER TEAM GETS TWO POINTS!"

"AND MURDERING ISN'T ENOUGH! YOU NEED STRATEGY."

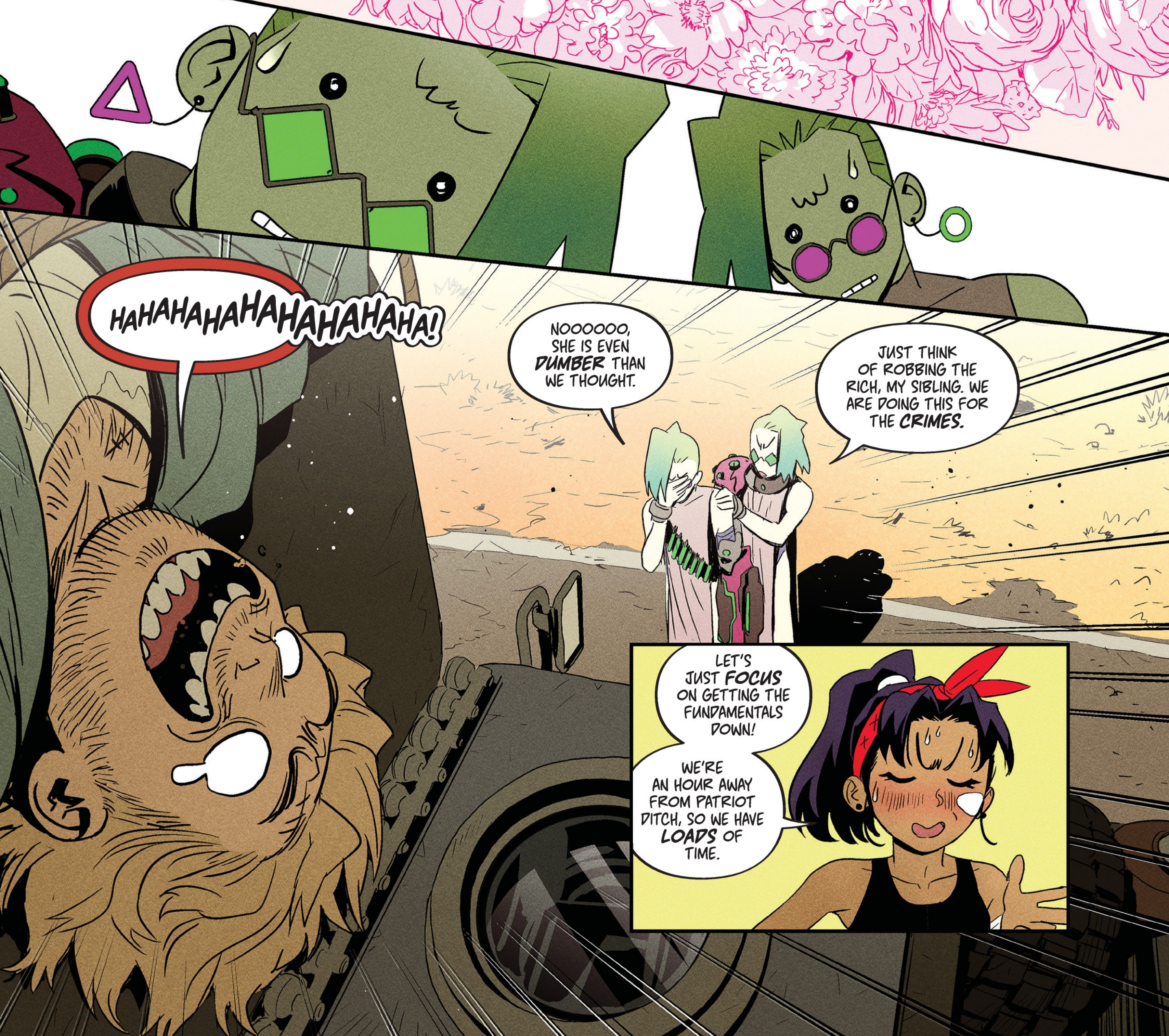
IF THE OTHER TEAM GETS INTO YOUR GOAL SQUARE MORE THAN ONCE, THEY'LL HAVE THE MOST POINTS!

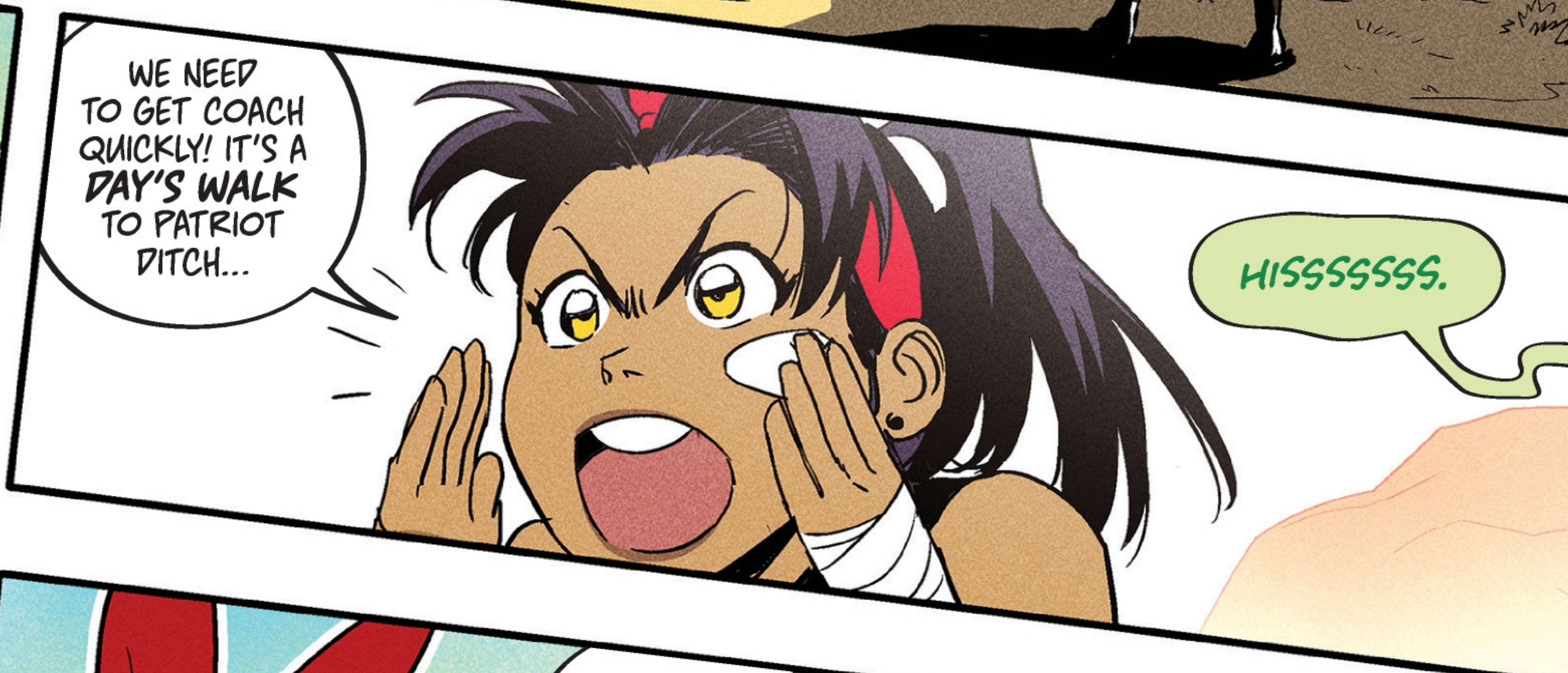
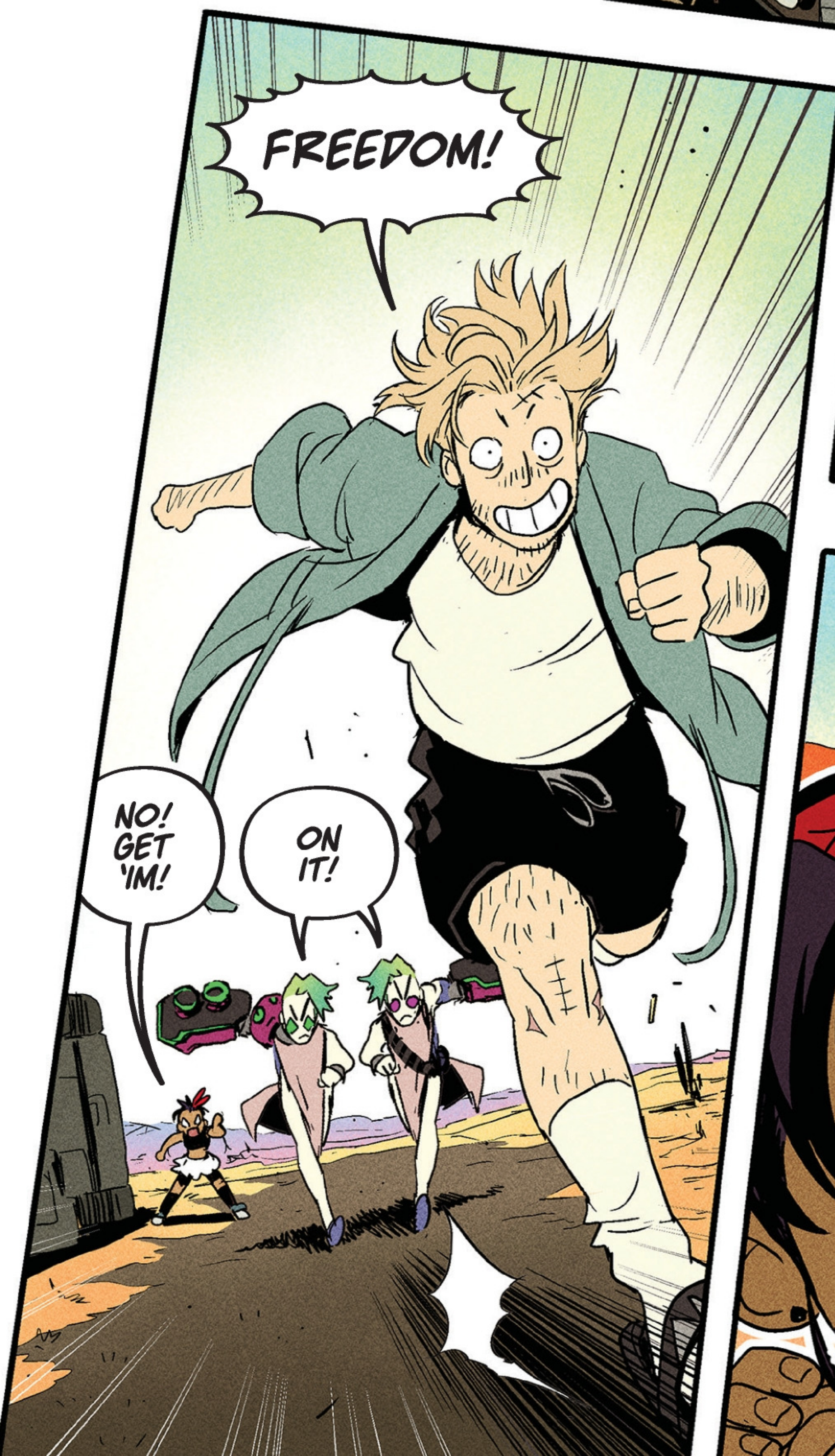
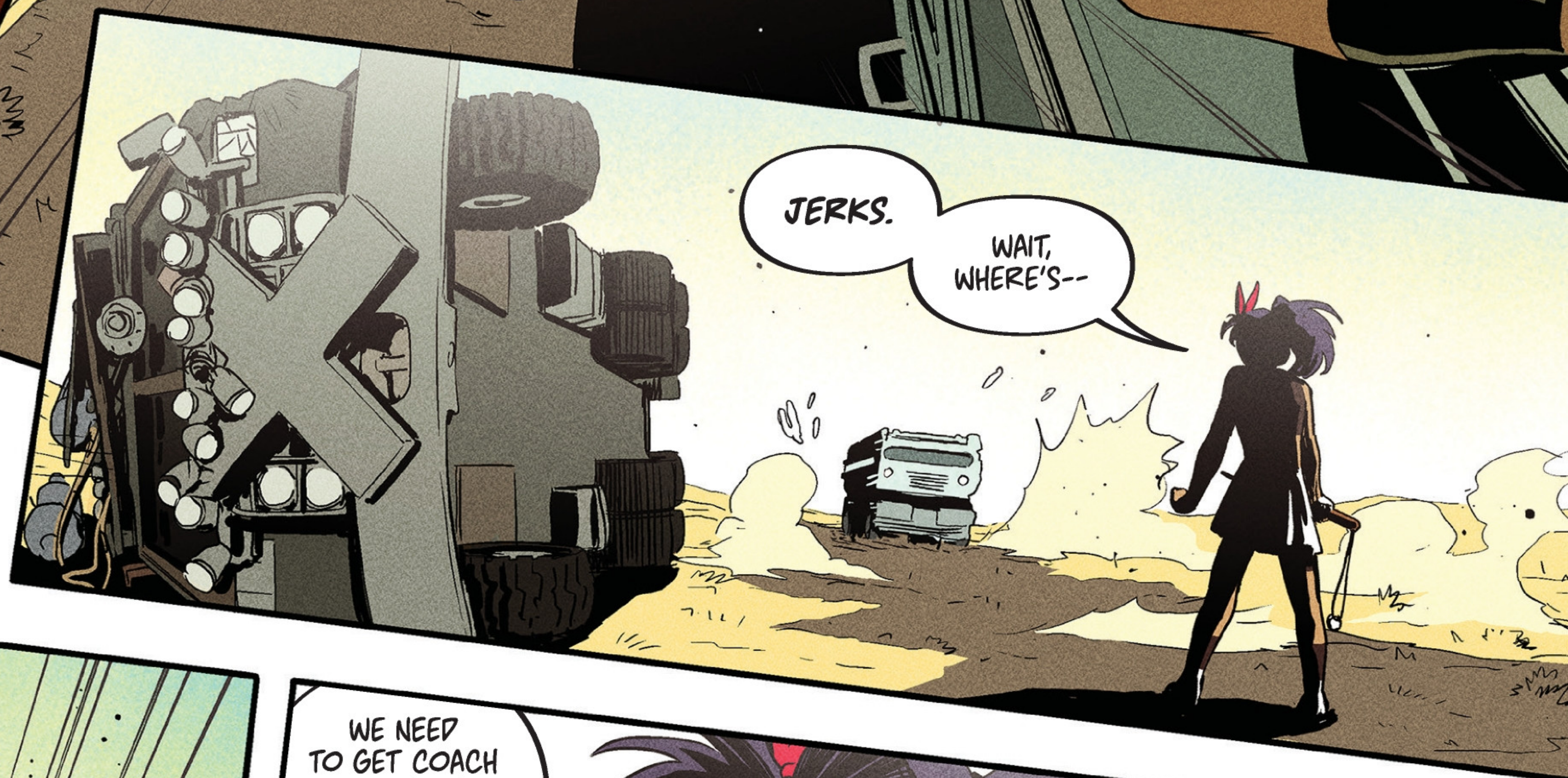
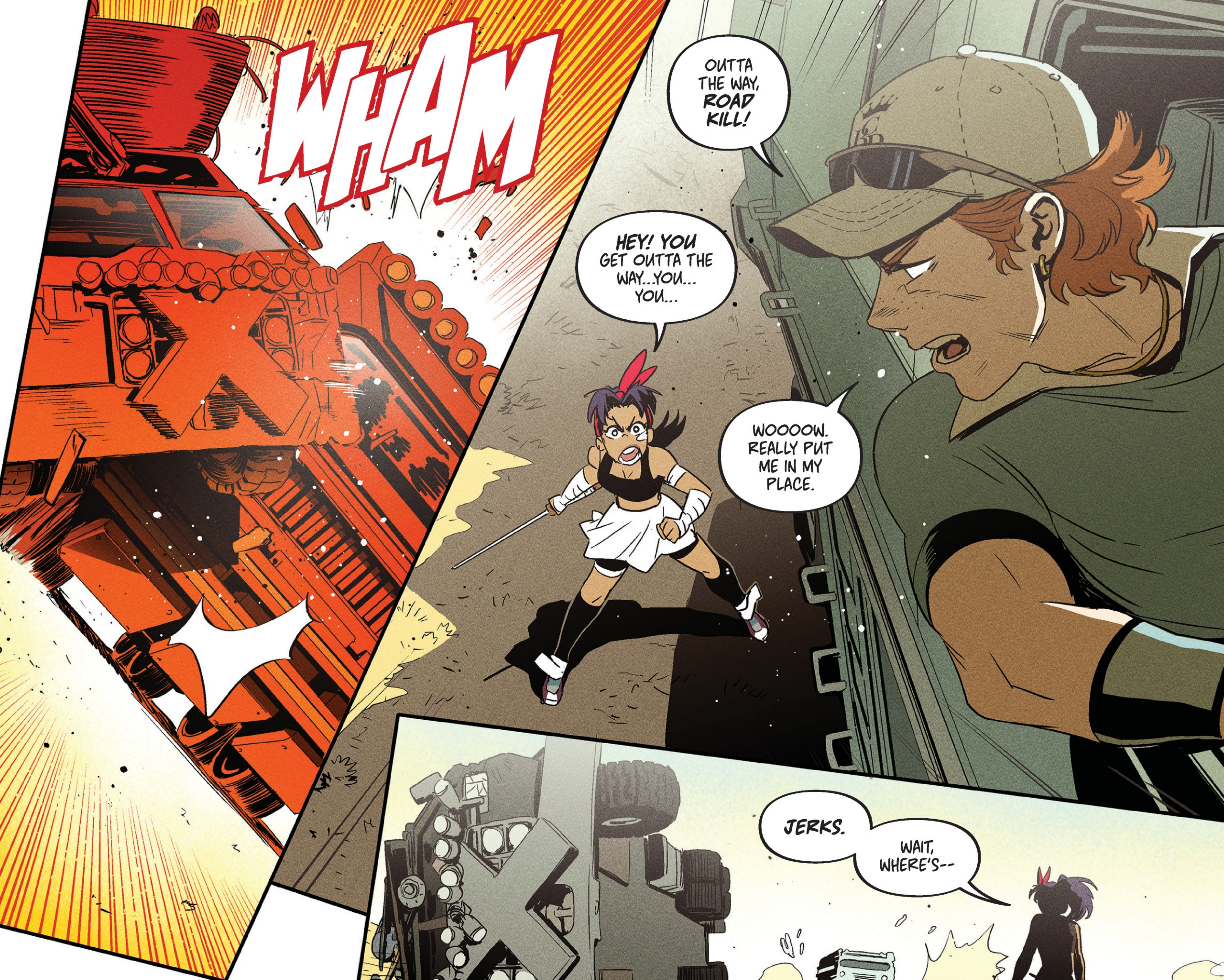
AND THEY COUNT **SEVERED HEADS** BOUNCING INTO THE SQUARE! BUT SOMETIMES IT IS GOOD TO TAKE THE TWO-POINT MURDER PENALTY, BECAUSE IF THEY HAVE A GREAT DEFENSE IT'S WORTH IT TO TAKE THEM OUT.

ALSO THE SECOND HALF OF THE GAME USUALLY CONTAINS THE **TYRANT'S SURPRISE**, BUT NOT IN DEATH MATCHES!

ANY QUESTIONS?!

YEAH. WHY DID YOU WRITE, "**MRS. TRINI SKULL-CRUSHER**" ON EVERY SINGLE PAGE?







OK.
WE HAD TO
DETOUR AFTER
BEING CHASED BY
MUTANTS, BUT
WE'RE FINALLY
HERE!



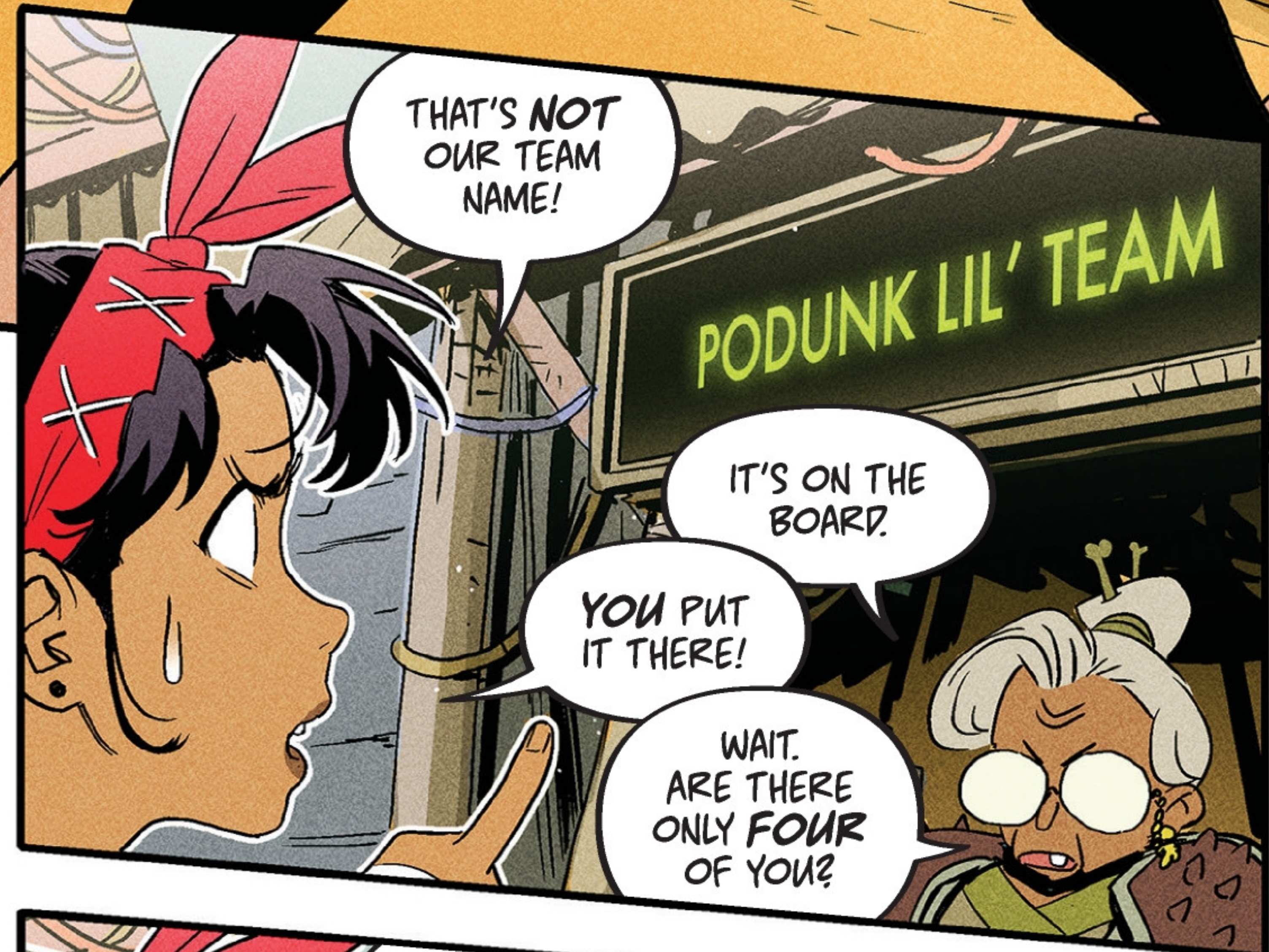
I NEED NEW
CLOTHES...

...AND NEW
SKIN.

I SEE
REGISTRATION!



HI. I'M
TRINI, TEAM
CAPTAIN. THE
NAME OF OUR
TEAM IS--



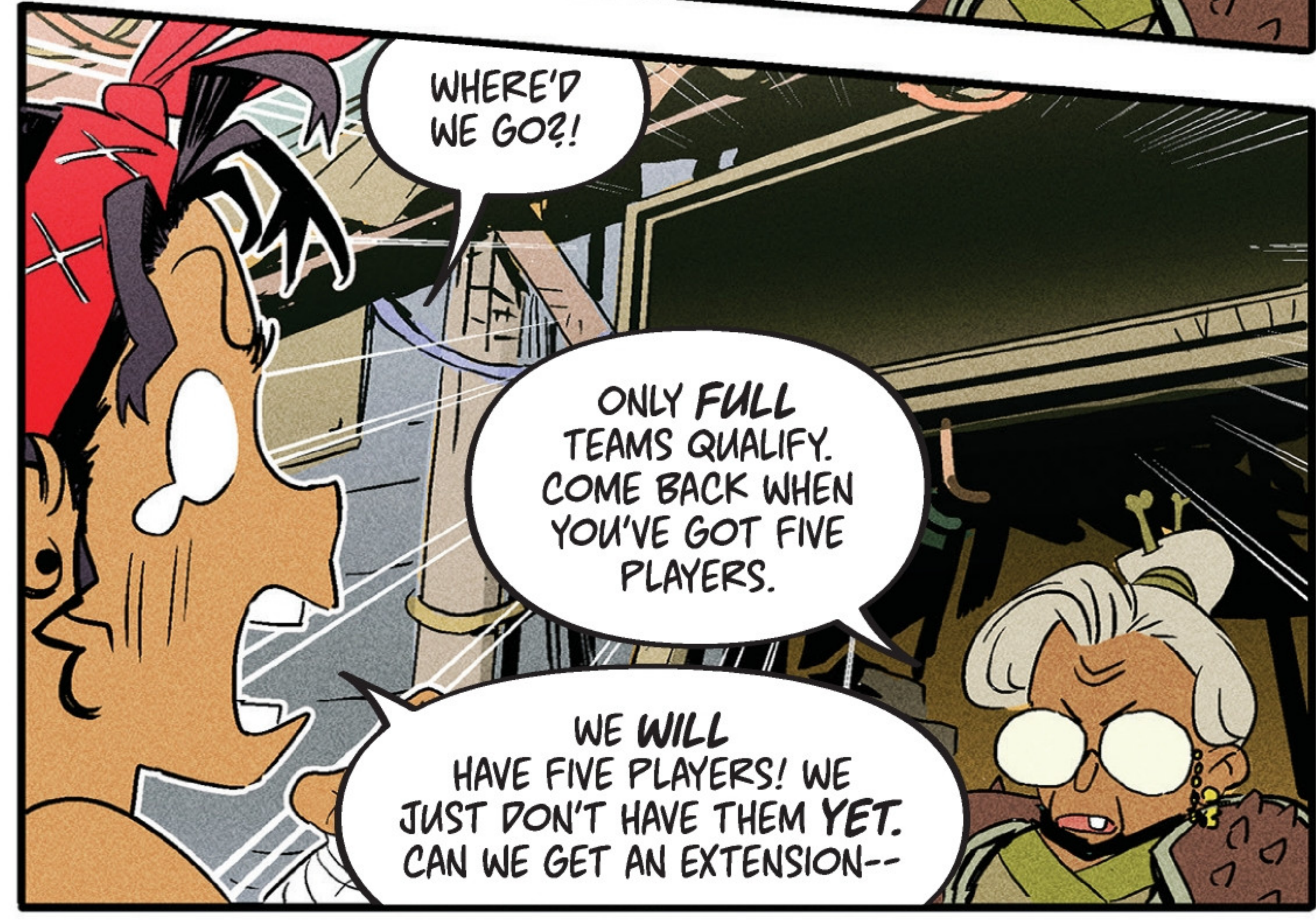
THAT'S NOT
OUR TEAM
NAME!

PODUNK LIL' TEAM

IT'S ON THE
BOARD.

YOU PUT
IT THERE!

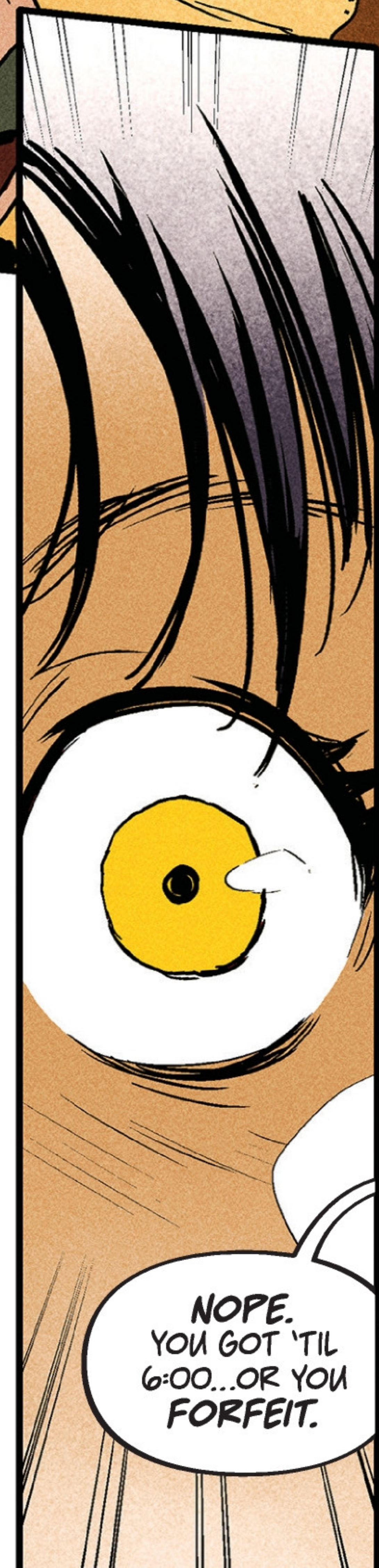
WAIT.
ARE THERE
ONLY **FOUR**
OF YOU?



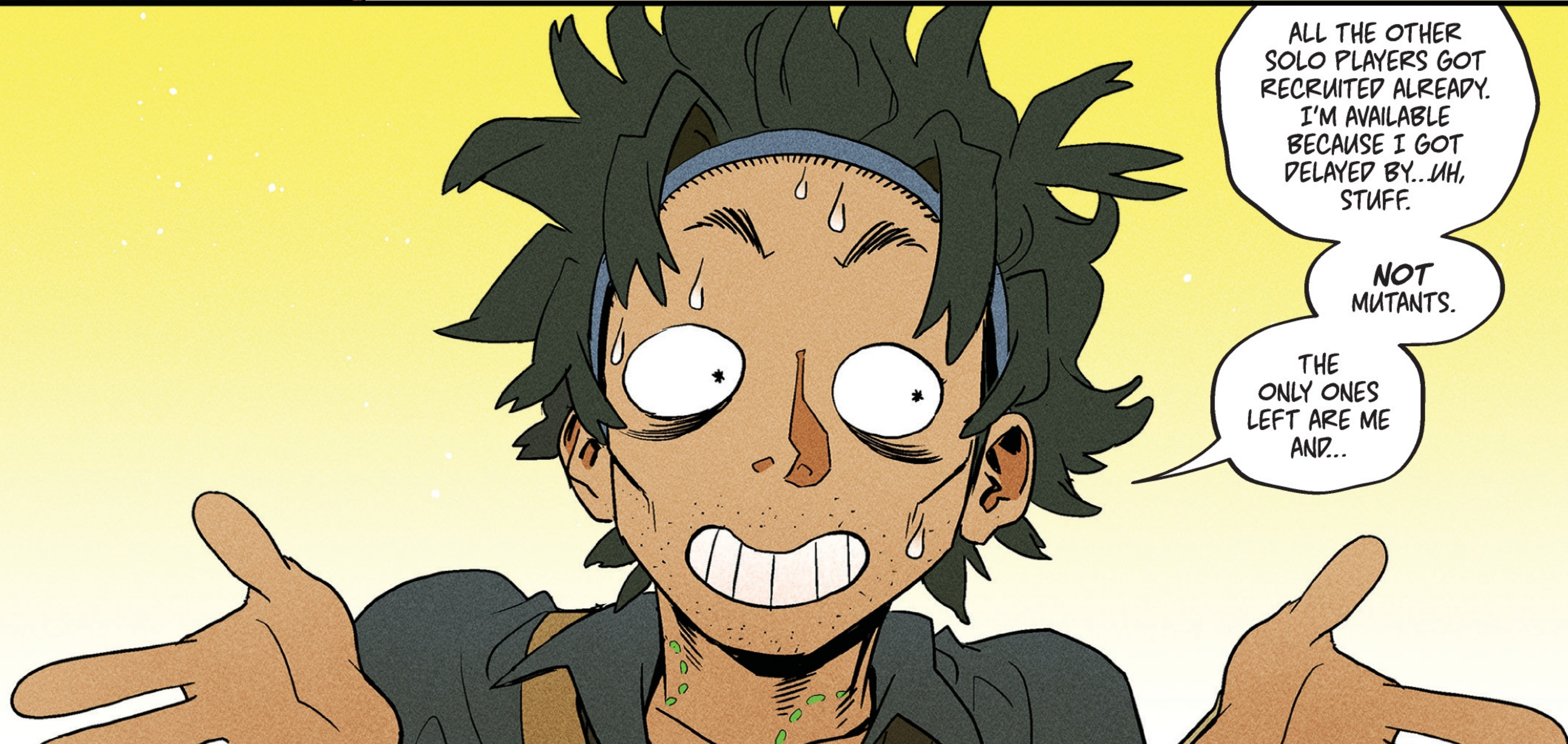
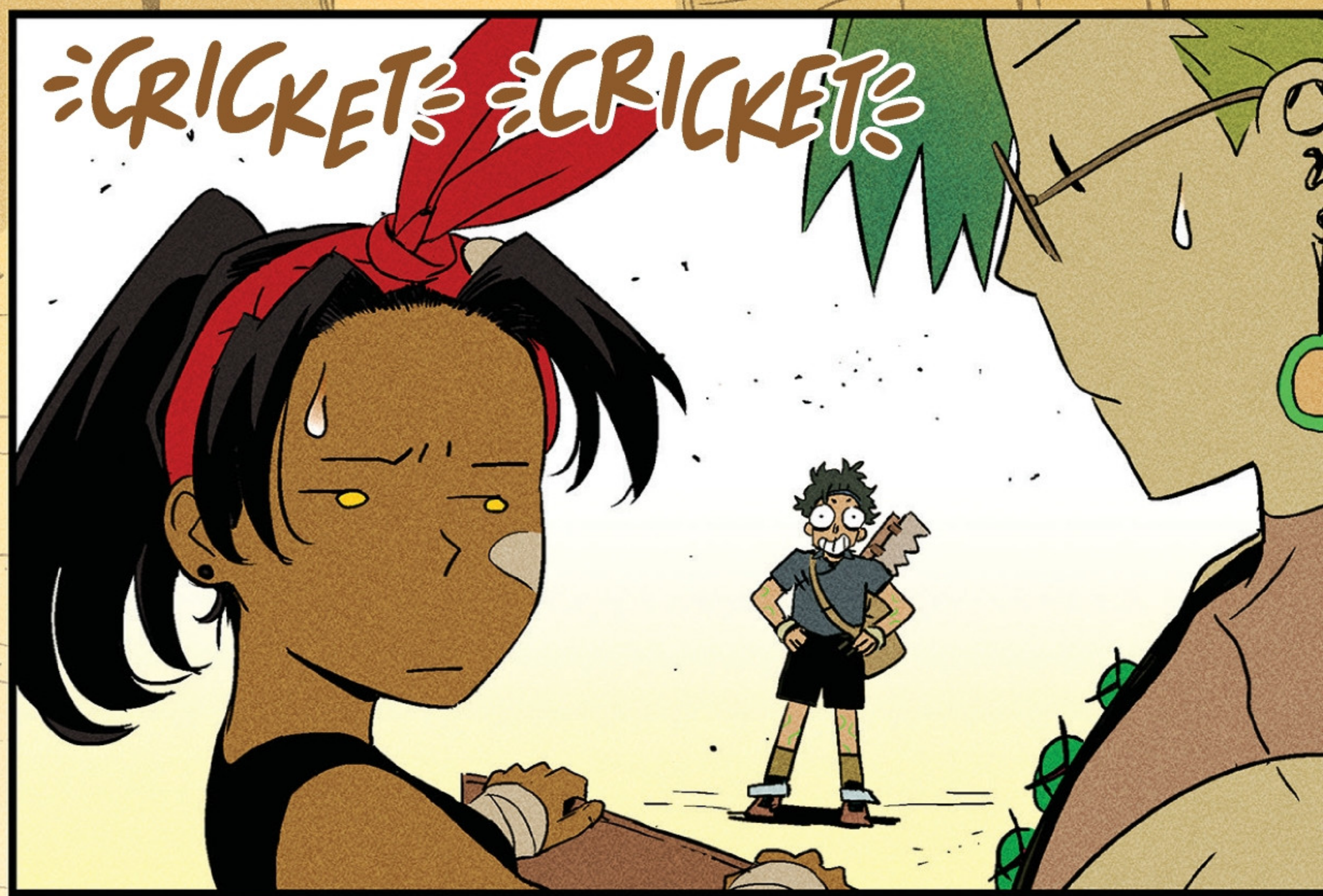
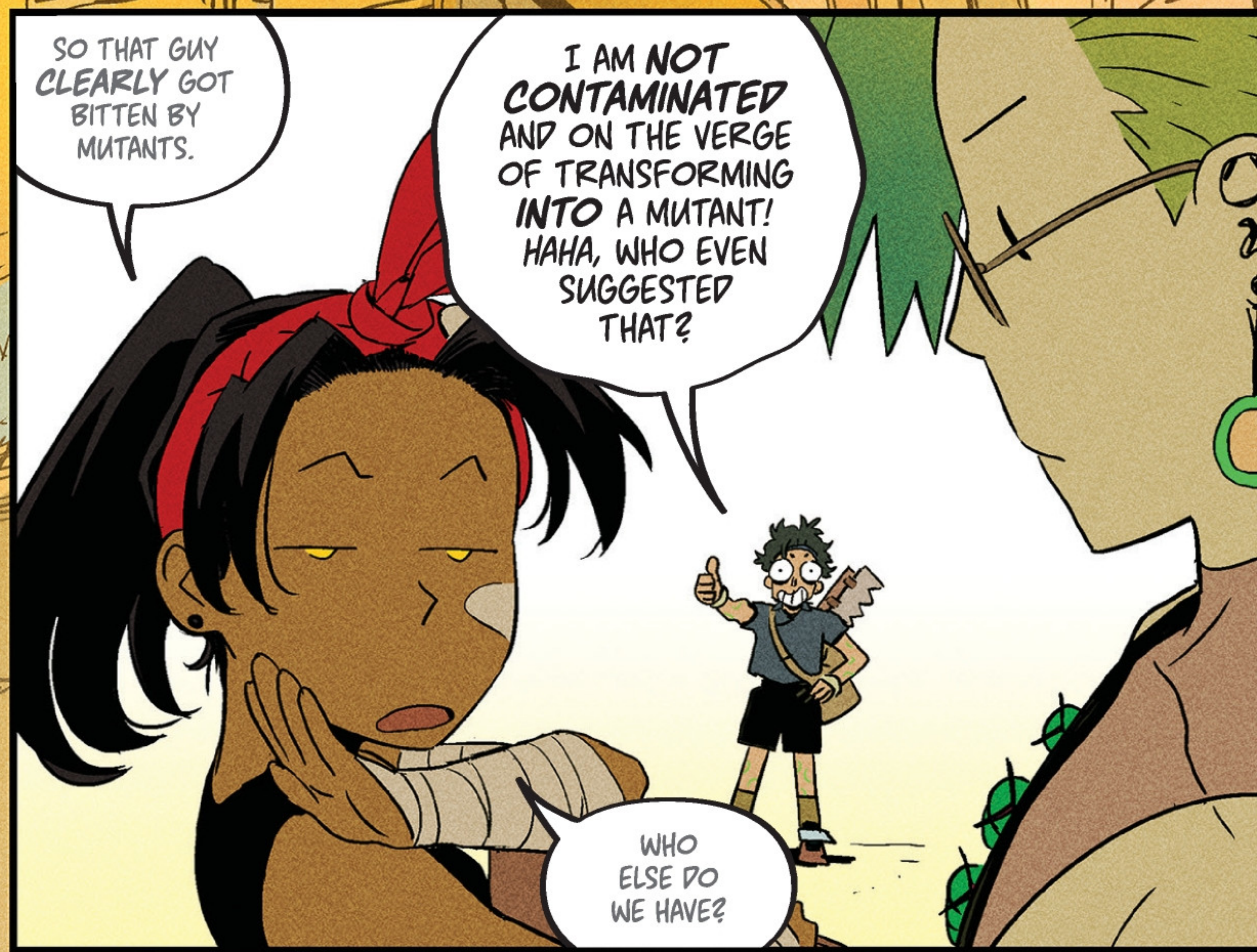
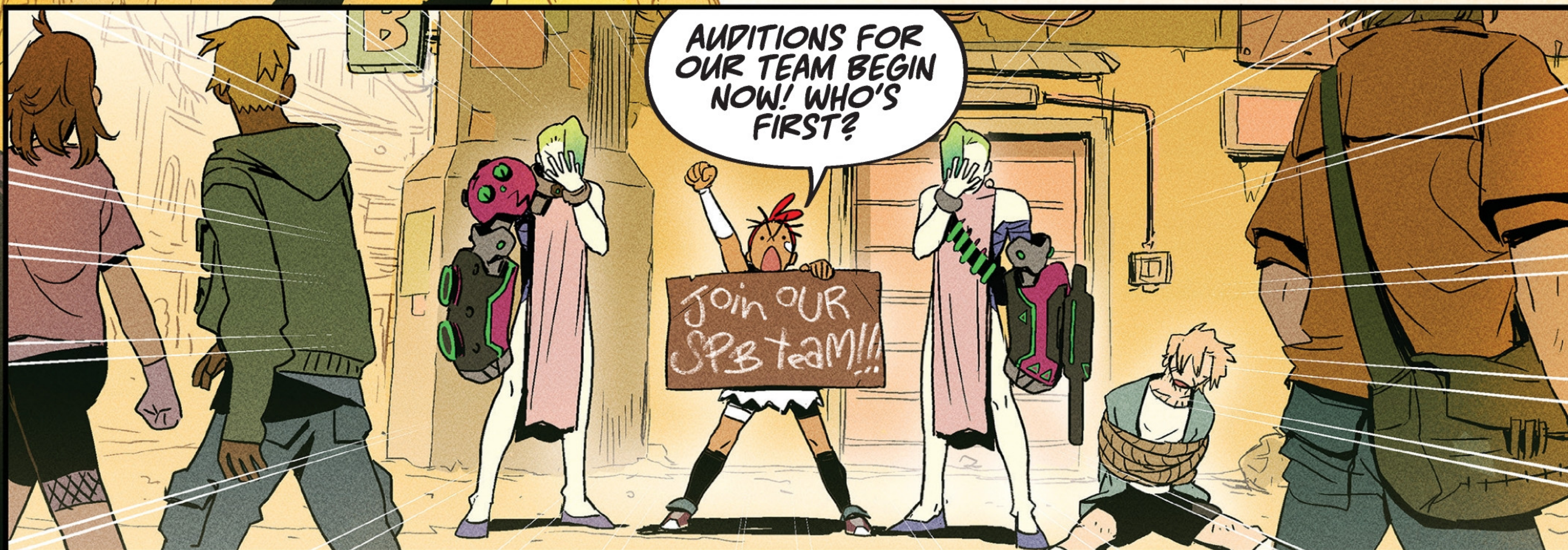
WHERE'D
WE GO?!

ONLY **FULL**
TEAMS QUALIFY.
COME BACK WHEN
YOU'VE GOT FIVE
PLAYERS.

WE **WILL**
HAVE FIVE PLAYERS! WE
JUST DON'T HAVE THEM YET.
CAN WE GET AN EXTENSION--



NOPE.
YOU GOT 'TIL
6:00...OR YOU
FORFEIT.





CUTTER DAN!

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S STILL AVAILABLE!

YOU GUYS SEE IF THERE'S ANYONE ELSE FOR GOALIE.

I GOT THIS.

CUTTER DAN! MY NAME IS TRINI, AND I--

SORRY KID, BUT I'M NOT DOING AUTOGRAPHS TODAY.

THAT'S NOT--

I KNOW I'M THE BEST SCREAMING PAIN BALL PLAYER EVER. BUT THAT MEANS I'M TOO BUSY TO DEAL WITH FANS.

WHAT?! SKULL-CRUSHER IS THE BEST PLAYER.

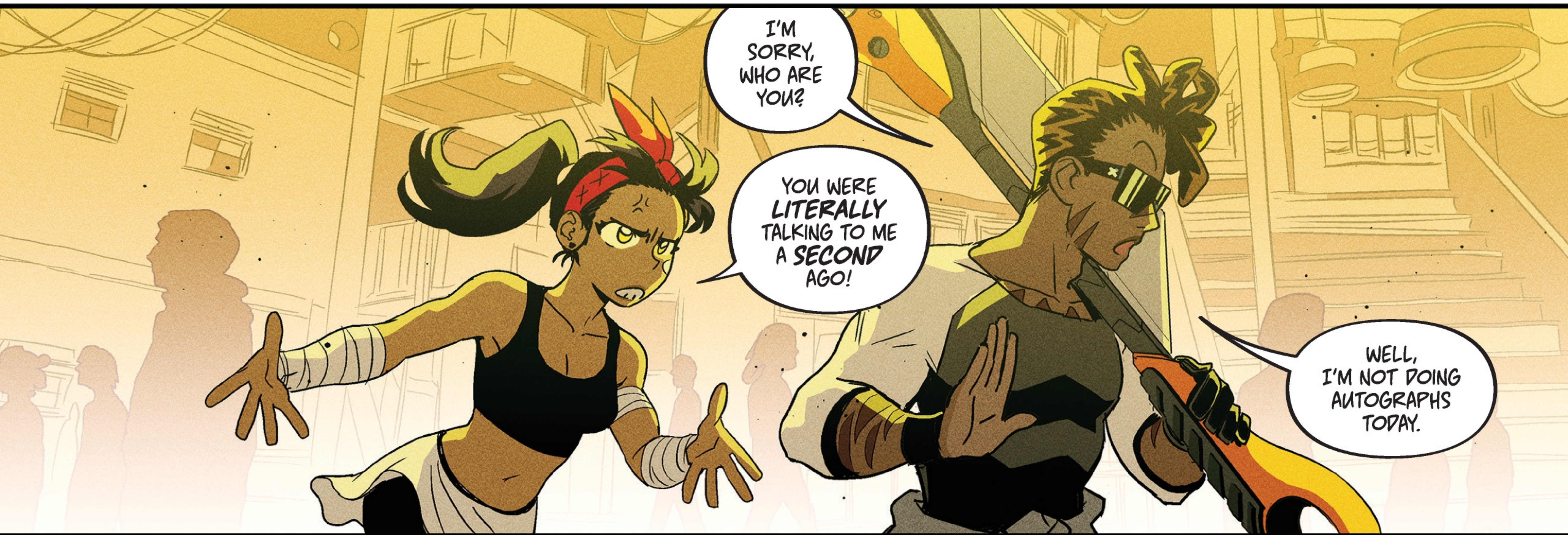
SKULL-CRUSHER IS A HAS-BEEN. I'M THE REAL DEAL.

TWITCH TWITCH

FIRST OF ALL--

HEY!

VANISH



I'M SORRY, WHO ARE YOU?

YOU WERE LITERALLY TALKING TO ME A SECOND AGO!

WELL, I'M NOT DOING AUTOGRAPHS TODAY.



I THINK WE GOT OFF ON THE WRONG FOOT... SOMEHOW.

I'M TRINI. I'M PUTTING TOGETHER A TEAM TO ENTER THE TOURNAMENT.

I NEED A SECOND STRIKER. YOU NEED A TEAM, OR ELSE YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT INTO THE LEAGUE--



NO.

I HAVEN'T GIVEN YOU THE FULL PITCH...

...DISTANT SECOND PLAYER TO SKULL-CRUSHER.



YOU DON'T SEEM TO BE GETTING IT. SO I'LL SAY IT SLOWLY.



LEAVE ME ALONE!

JOIN MY TEAM!

BUZZ-OFF, ROAD-KILL.



HE'S WITH
OUR TEAM.
ROLL
CALL!

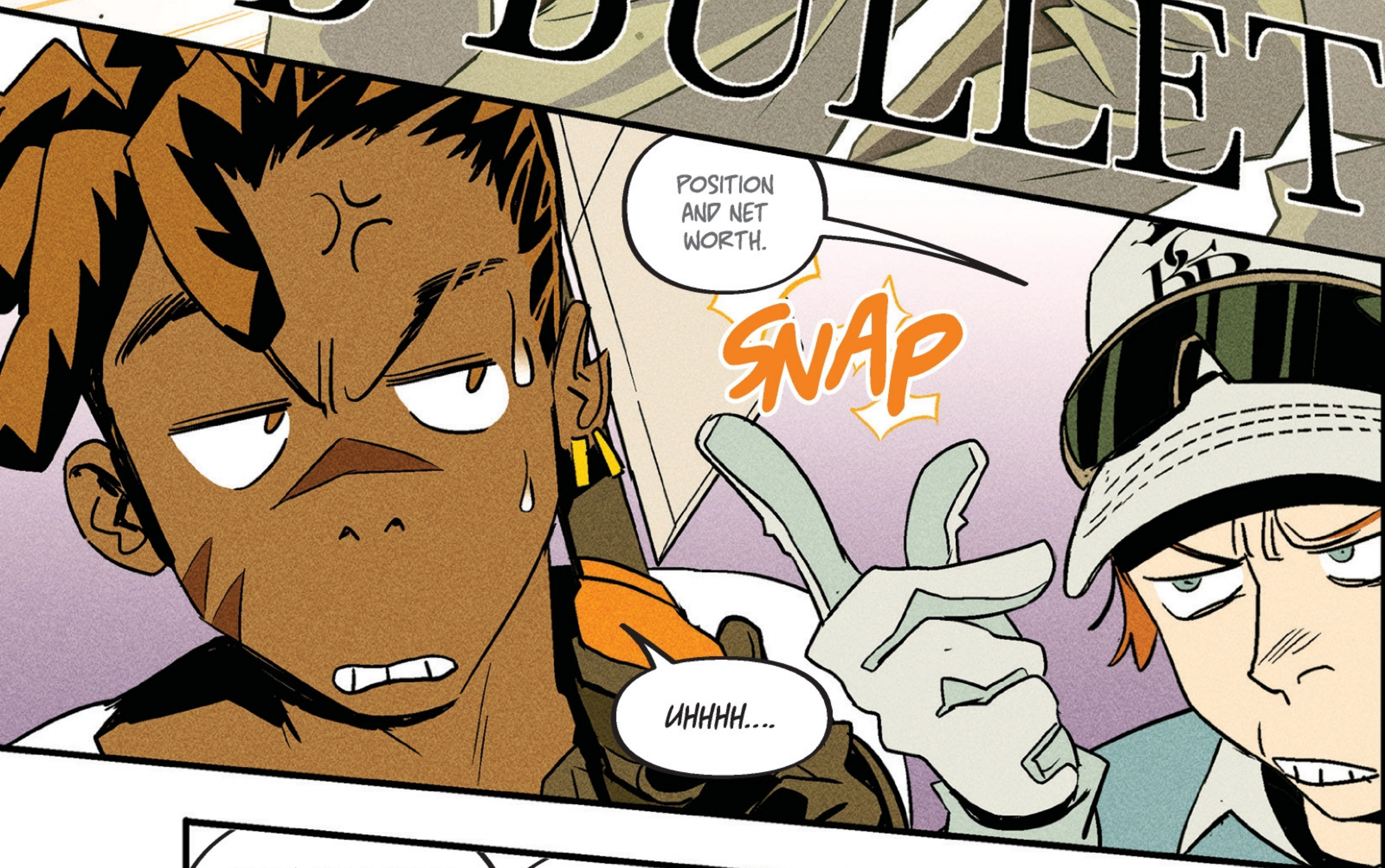
GOALIE, NET
WORTH: 800K
GALLONS!

FIRST
DEFENSE, NET
WORTH: 570K
GALLONS OF
WATER!

SECOND
DEFENSE, NET
WORTH: 1.2 MILLION
GALLONS!

MARCUS,
TEAM CAPTAIN,
FORWARD STRIKER.
NET WORTH: MORE
THAN YOU CAN
CONCEIVE.

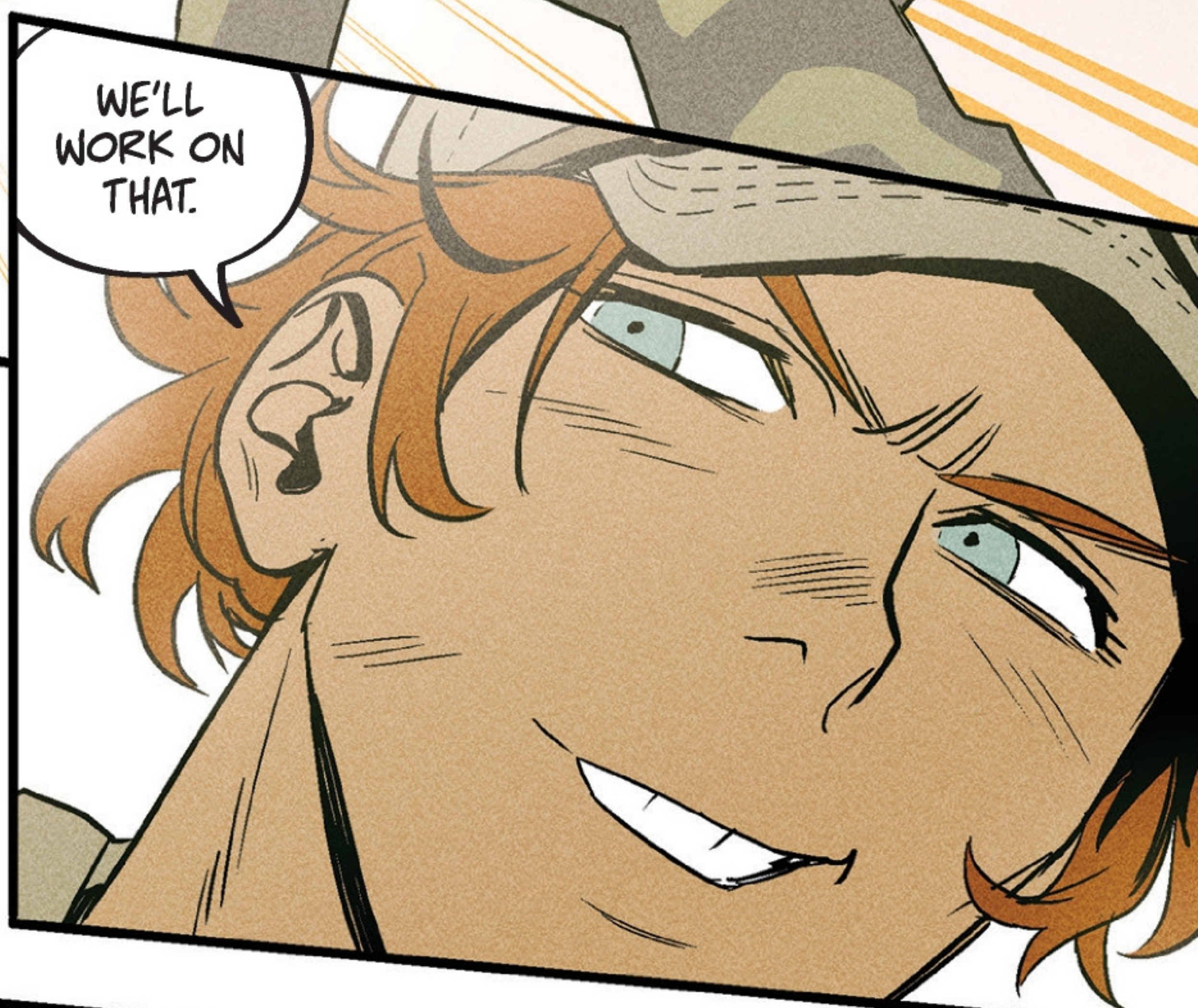
ANNZ...



POSITION
AND NET
WORTH.

SNAP

UHHHH....



WE'LL
WORK ON
THAT.

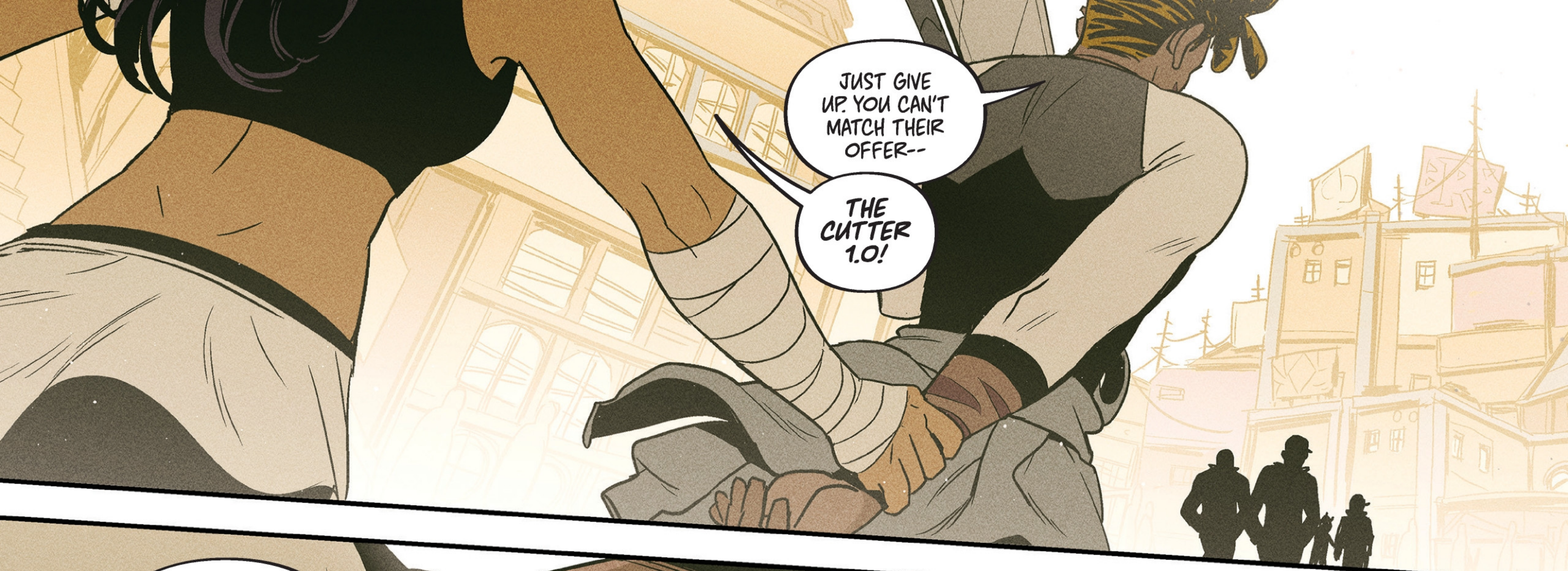


YOU. YOU THINK
YOU CAN COMPETE
WITH BUBBLE
CITY ALPHA'S
BEST AMATEUR
TEAM?

THAT SOMEONE AS
POOR AS YOU CAN
OFFER SOMETHING WE
CAN'T? HMM?

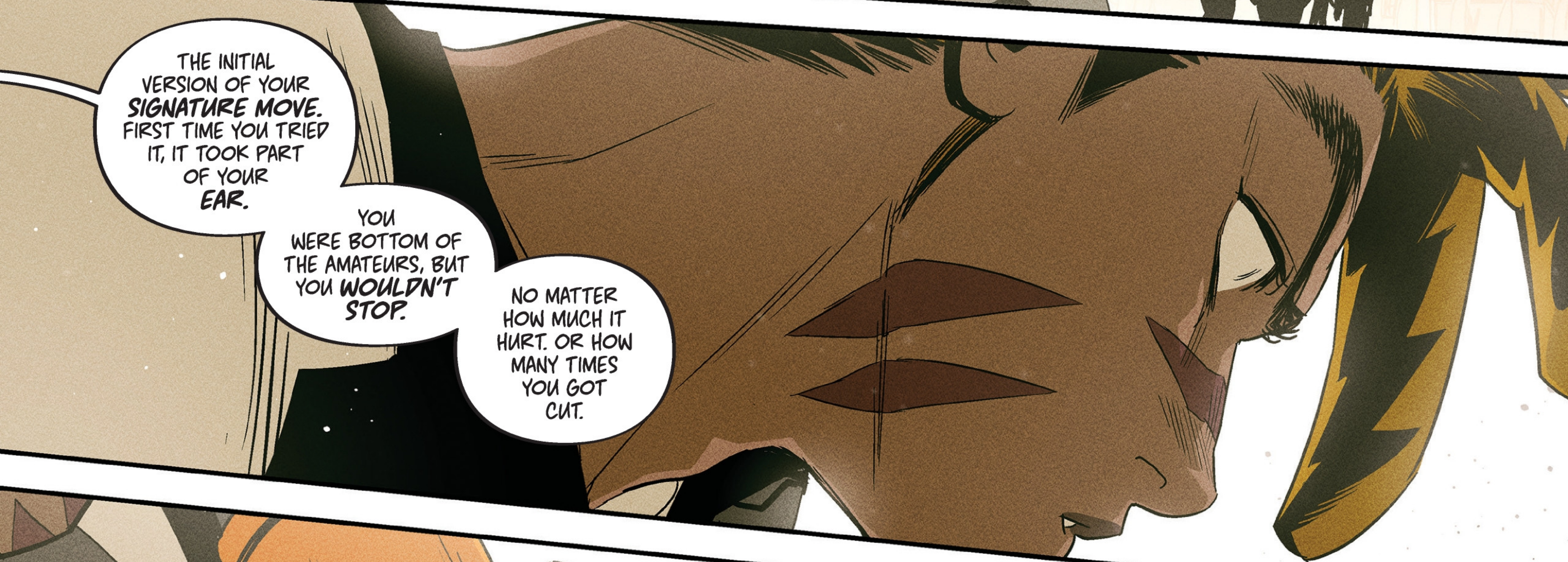


YEAH,
THAT'S WHAT
I THOUGHT.
LET'S GO.



JUST GIVE UP. YOU CAN'T MATCH THEIR OFFER--

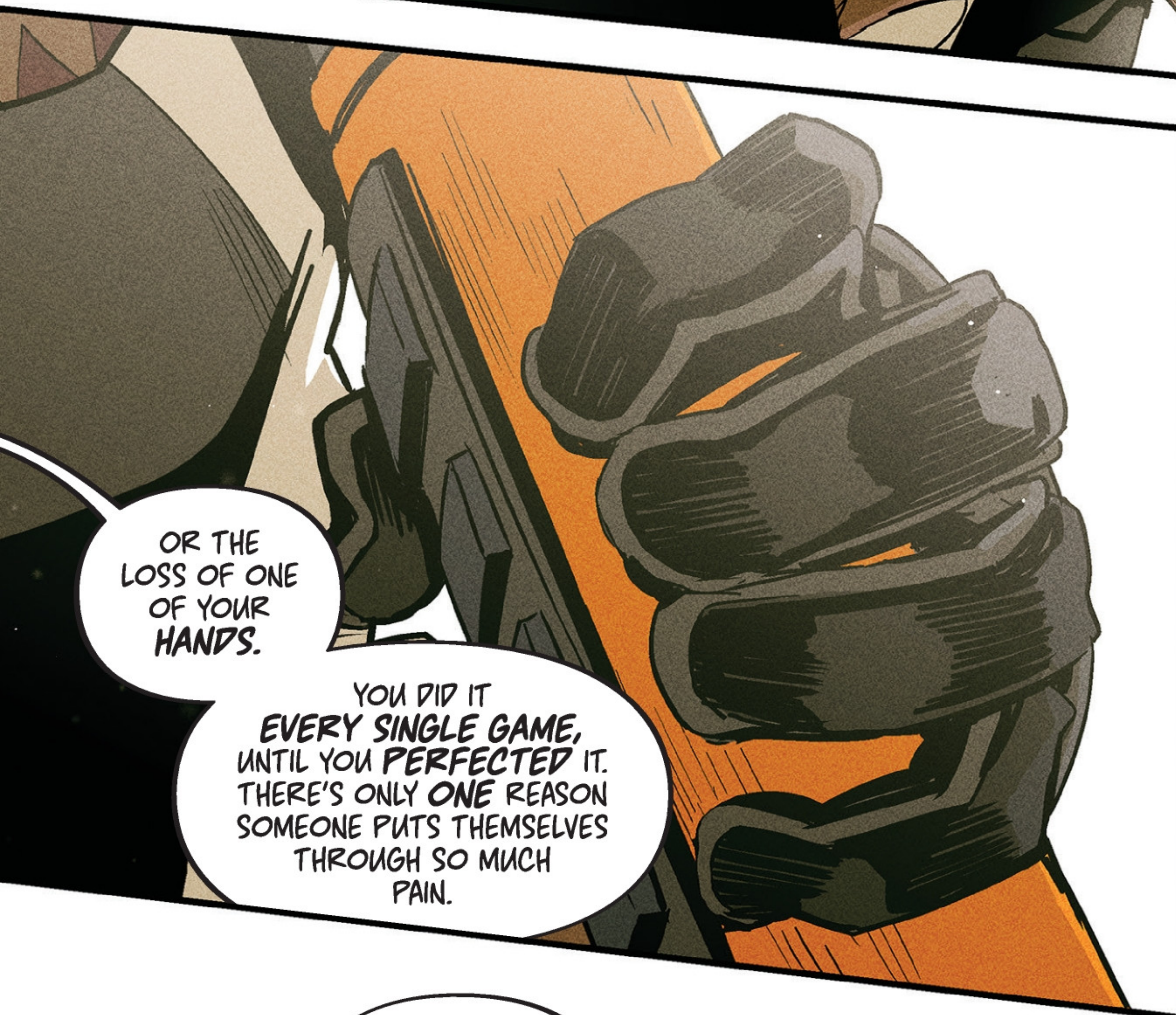
THE CUTTER 1.0!



THE INITIAL VERSION OF YOUR **SIGNATURE MOVE**. FIRST TIME YOU TRIED IT, IT TOOK PART OF YOUR **EAR**.

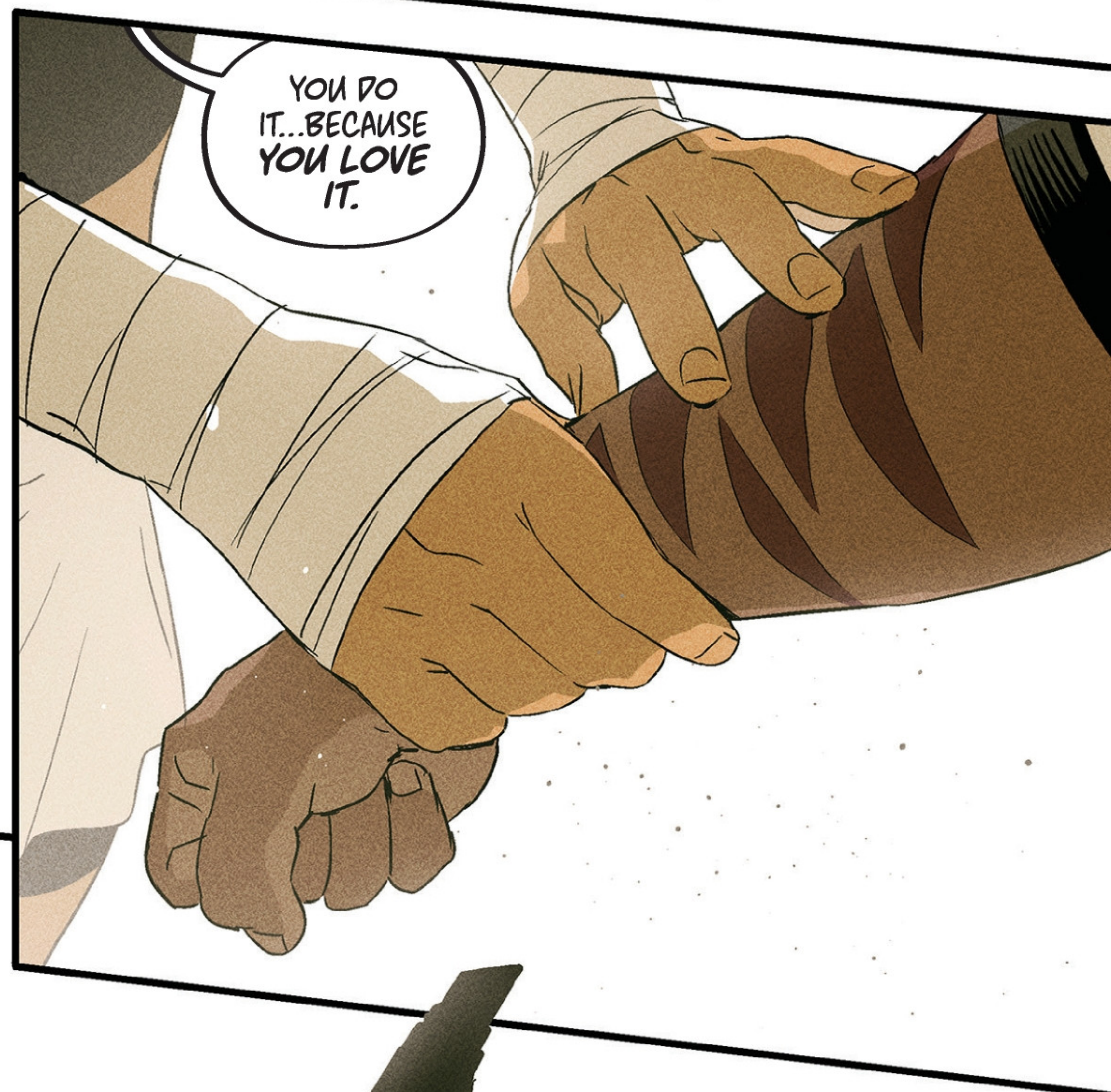
YOU WERE BOTTOM OF THE AMATEURS, BUT YOU **WOULDN'T STOP**.

NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT HURT. OR HOW MANY TIMES YOU GOT CUT.



OR THE LOSS OF ONE OF YOUR **HANDS**.

YOU DID IT **EVERY SINGLE GAME**, UNTIL YOU **PERFECTED IT**. THERE'S ONLY **ONE** REASON SOMEONE PUTS THEMSELVES THROUGH SO MUCH PAIN.

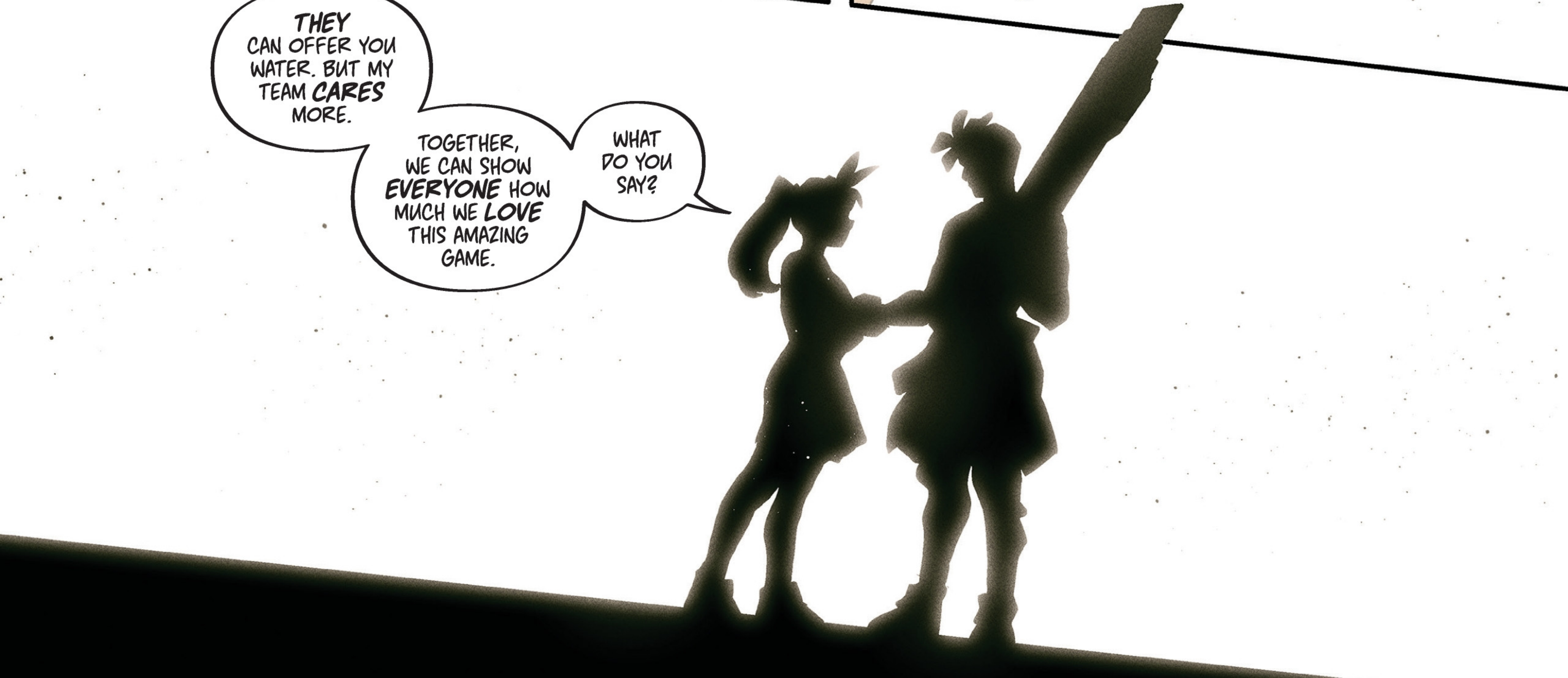


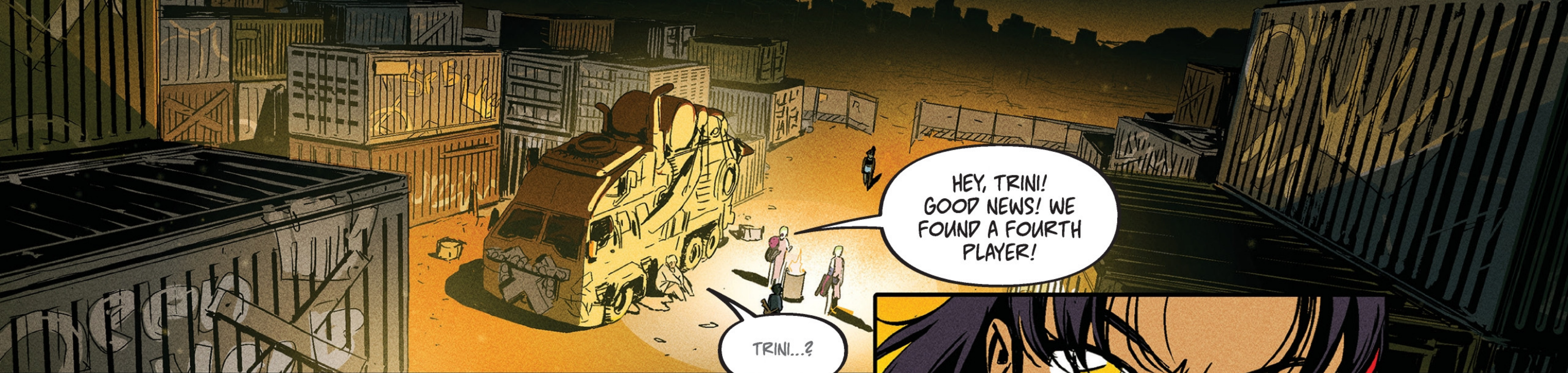
YOU DO IT...BECAUSE YOU **LOVE IT**.

THEY CAN OFFER YOU WATER. BUT MY TEAM **CARES MORE**.

TOGETHER, WE CAN SHOW **EVERYONE** HOW MUCH WE **LOVE** THIS AMAZING GAME.

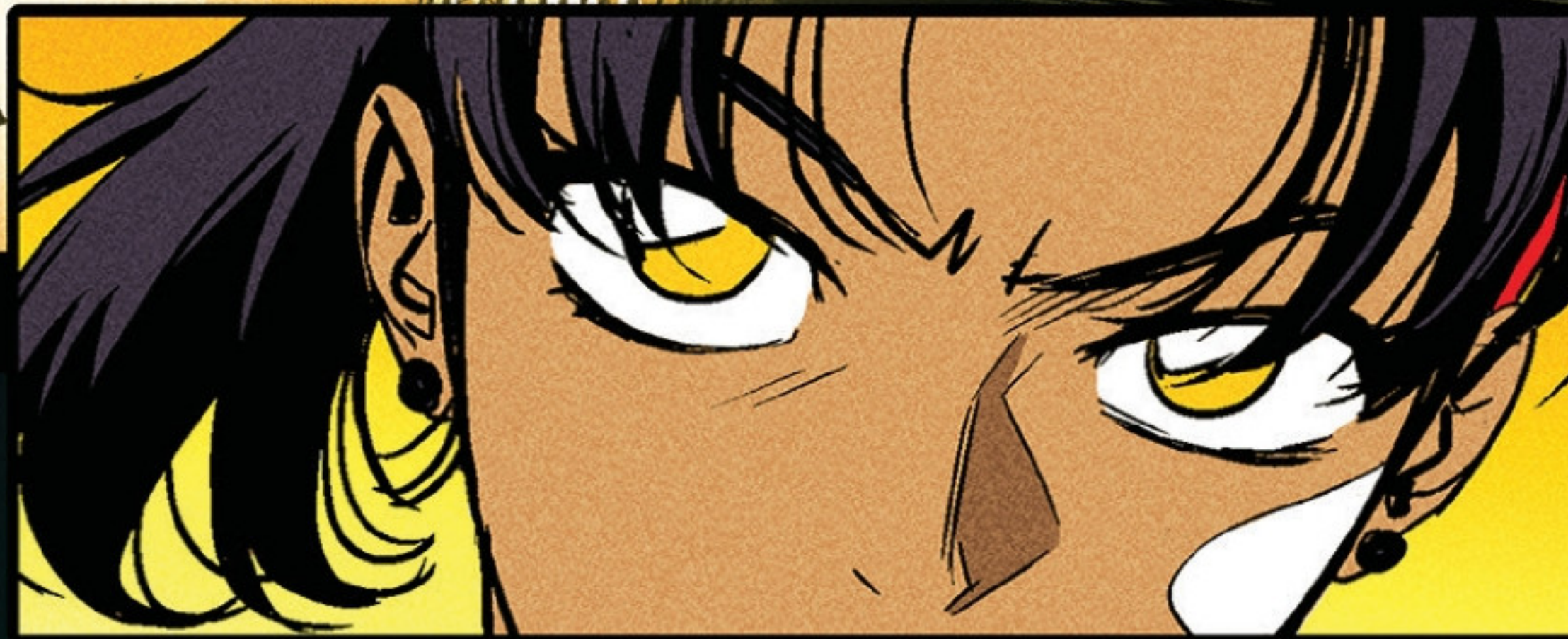
WHAT DO YOU SAY?





HEY, TRINI!
GOOD NEWS! WE
FOUND A FOURTH
PLAYER!

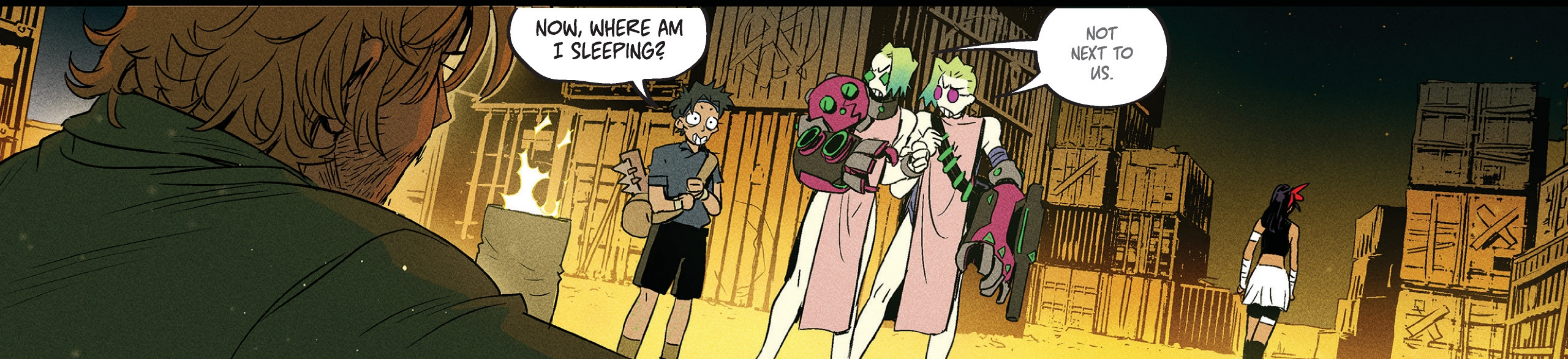
TRINI...?



TADA!

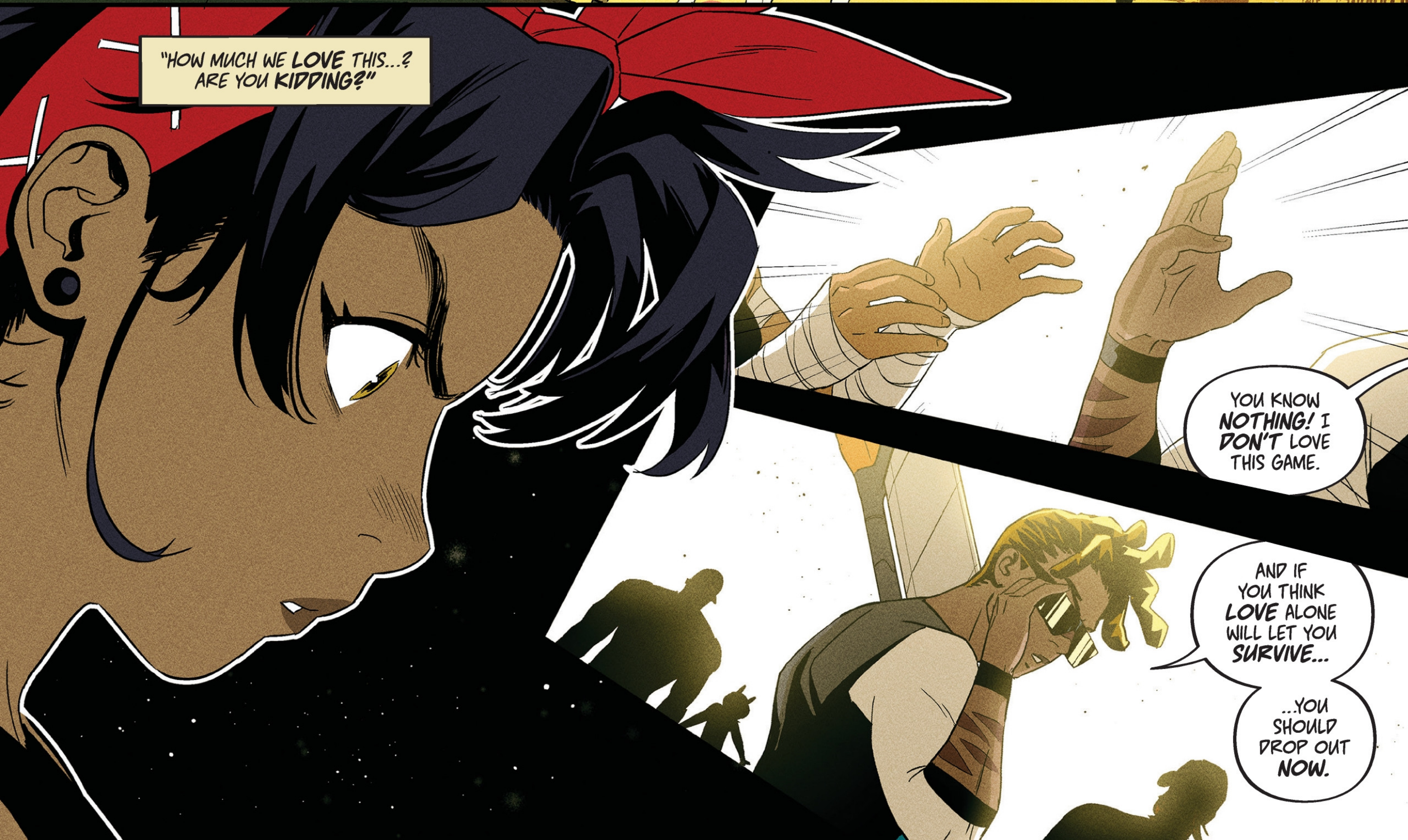
I'M SO GLAD
FOR THIS
OPPORTUNITY!

I HAVE TO
WARN YOU, I'M
NOT GOOD, BUT
THAT IS THE **ONLY**
THING WRONG
WITH ME!



NOW, WHERE AM
I SLEEPING?

NOT
NEXT TO
US.



"HOW MUCH WE LOVE THIS...?
ARE YOU KIDDING?"

YOU KNOW
NOTHING! I
DON'T LOVE
THIS GAME.

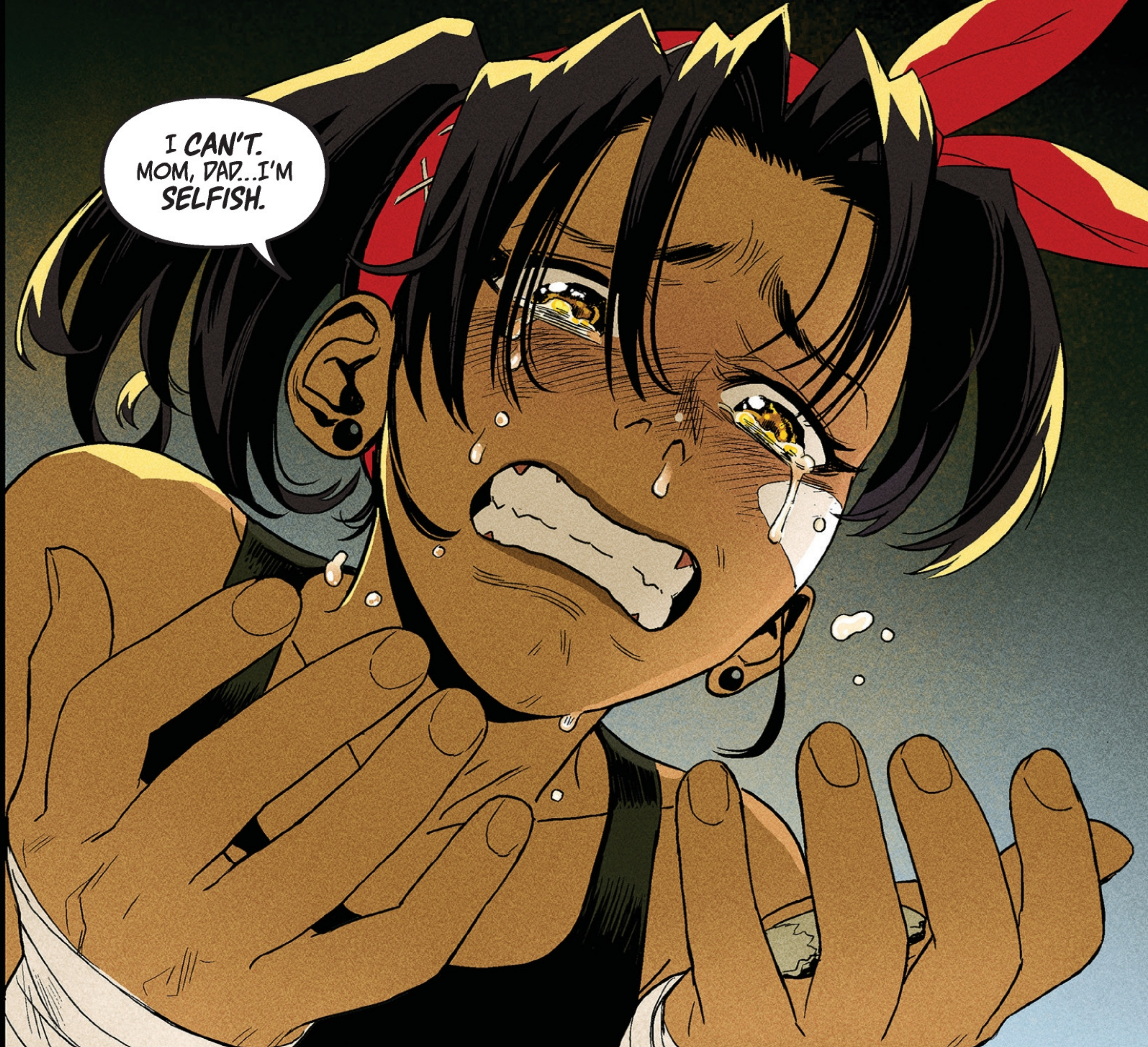
AND IF
YOU THINK
LOVE ALONE
WILL LET YOU
SURVIVE...

...YOU
SHOULD
DROP OUT
NOW.



MOM, DAD.
WE'RE HERE.
THERE'S SOME
BIG OBSTACLES
STILL...BUT
I'M SURE
I CAN...

I CAN...



I CAN'T.
MOM, DAD...I'M
SELFISH.

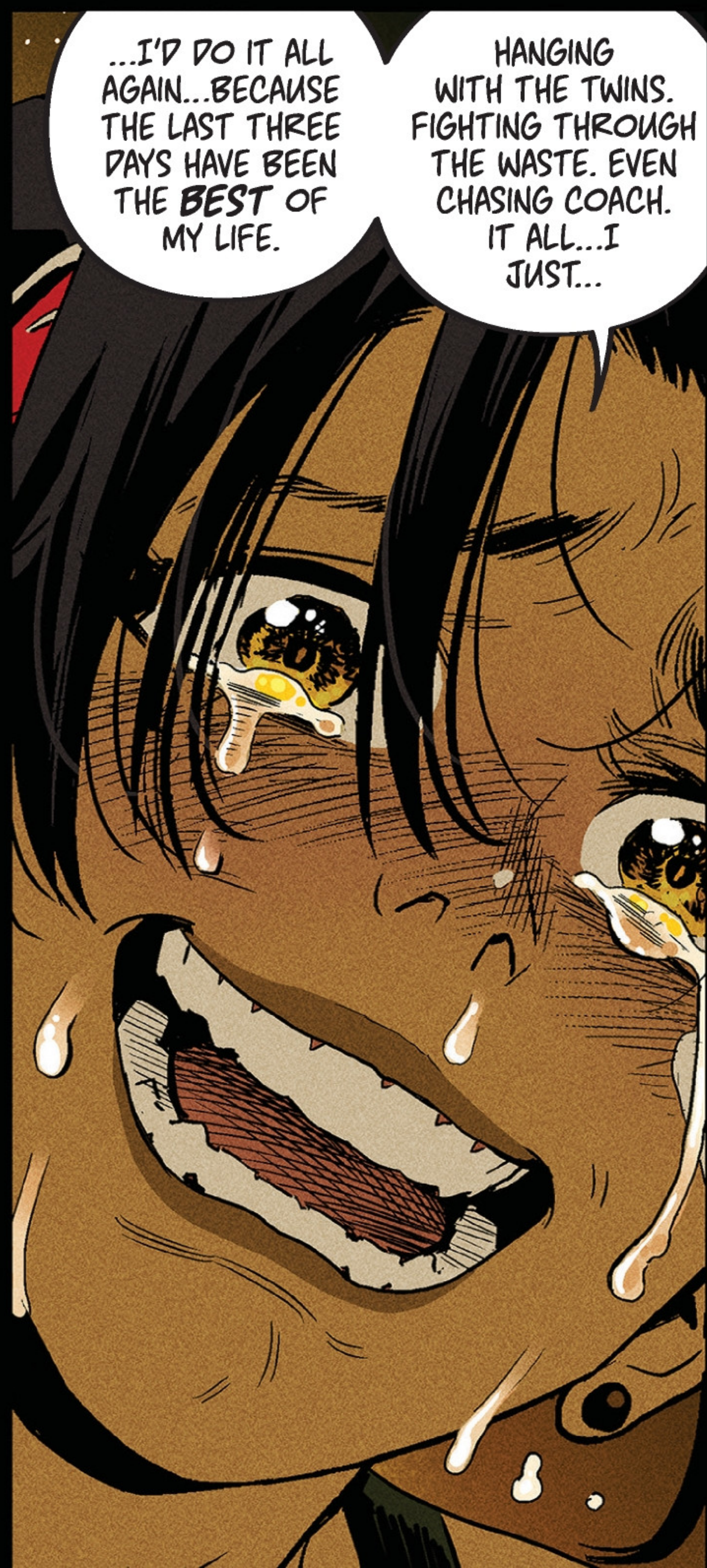


THIS IS MY
DREAM...BUT
WHAT DO I HAVE
TO **OFFER** TO
ANYONE
ELSE?

I'M THE
ONE WHO IS TAKING
EVERYTHING HERE.
I'M BRIBING TWO
BANDITS.

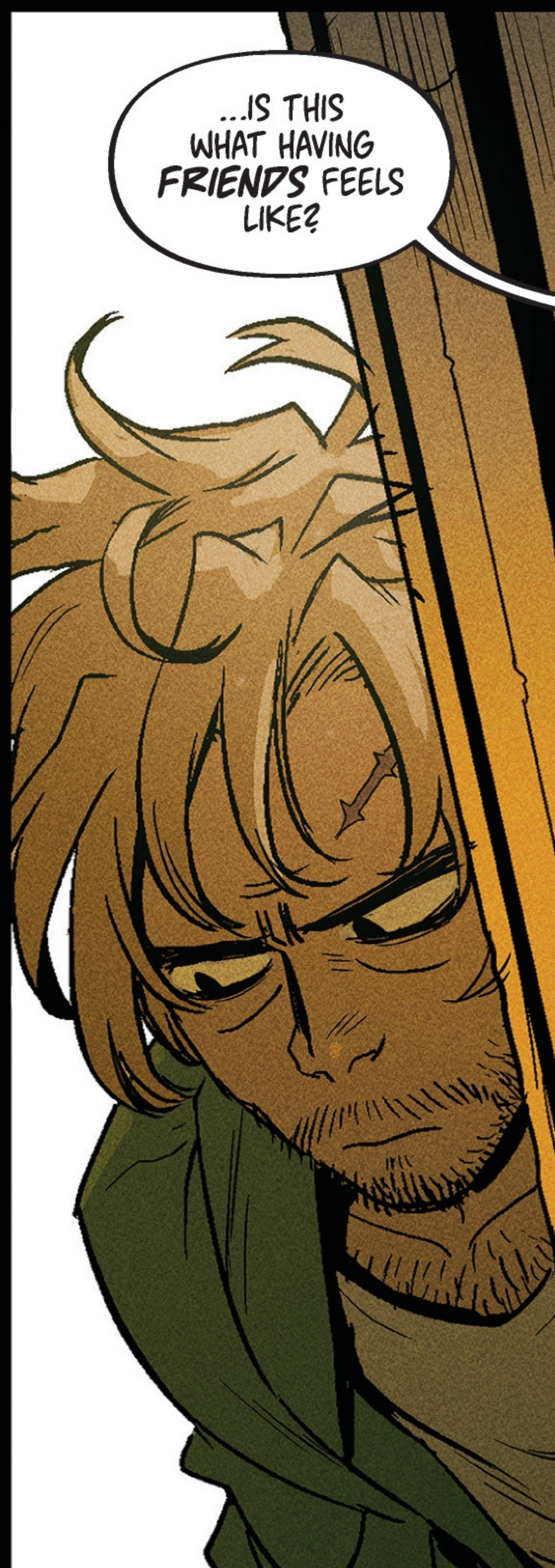


I **KIDNAPPED**
OUR COACH. BUT
WORST OF
ALL...

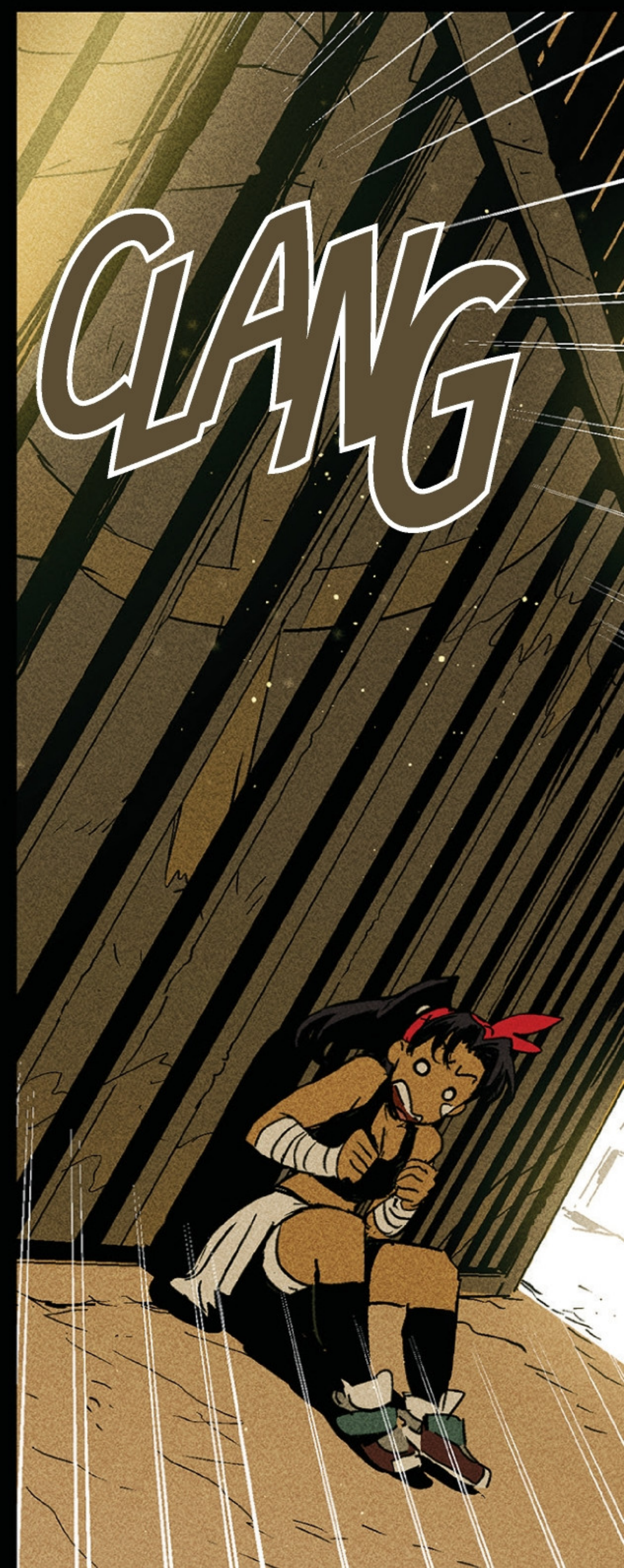


...I'D DO IT ALL
AGAIN...BECAUSE
THE LAST THREE
DAYS HAVE BEEN
THE **BEST** OF
MY LIFE.

HANGING
WITH THE TWINS.
FIGHTING THROUGH
THE WASTE. EVEN
CHASING COACH.
IT ALL...I
JUST...



...IS THIS
WHAT HAVING
FRIENDS FEELS
LIKE?



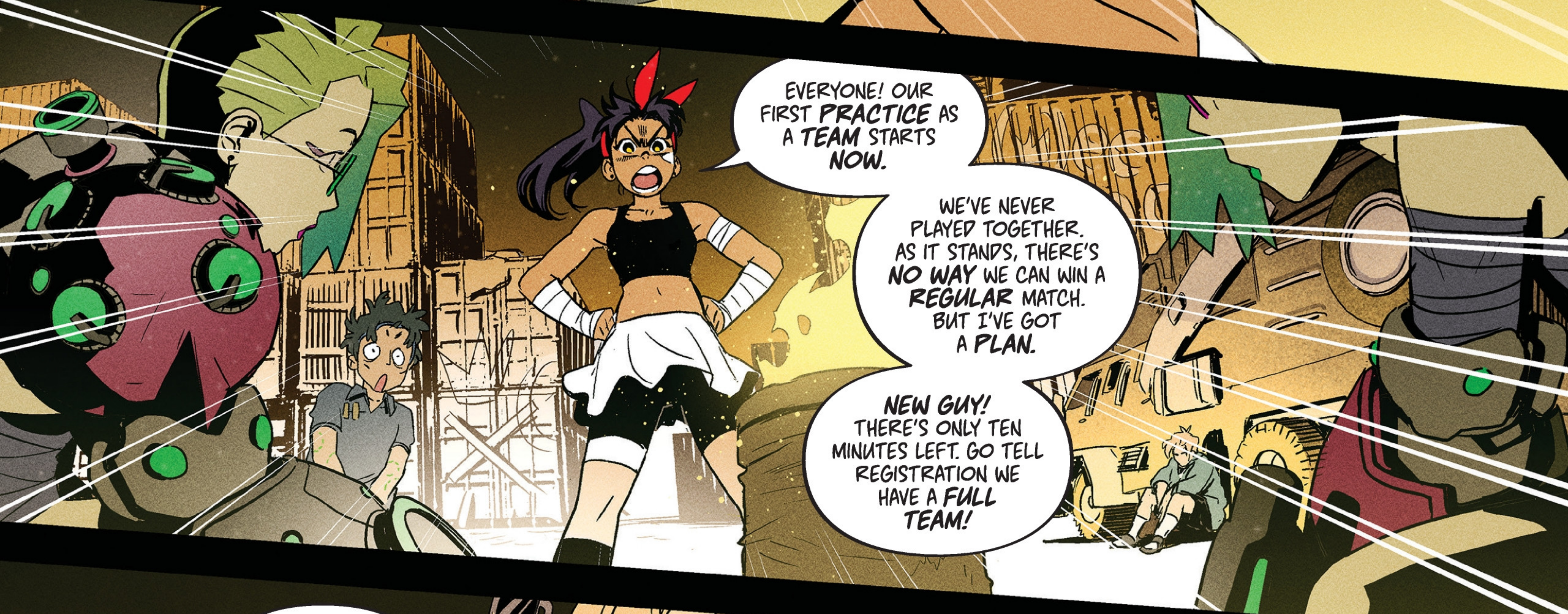
CLANG



HUH?

CUTTER MAX

STATUS: First Tier Rookie
RECORD: Three wins
BEST MOVE: "Currently working on my signature CUTTER MOVE!"
ATK/2000 DEF/2000 STAMINA 4500

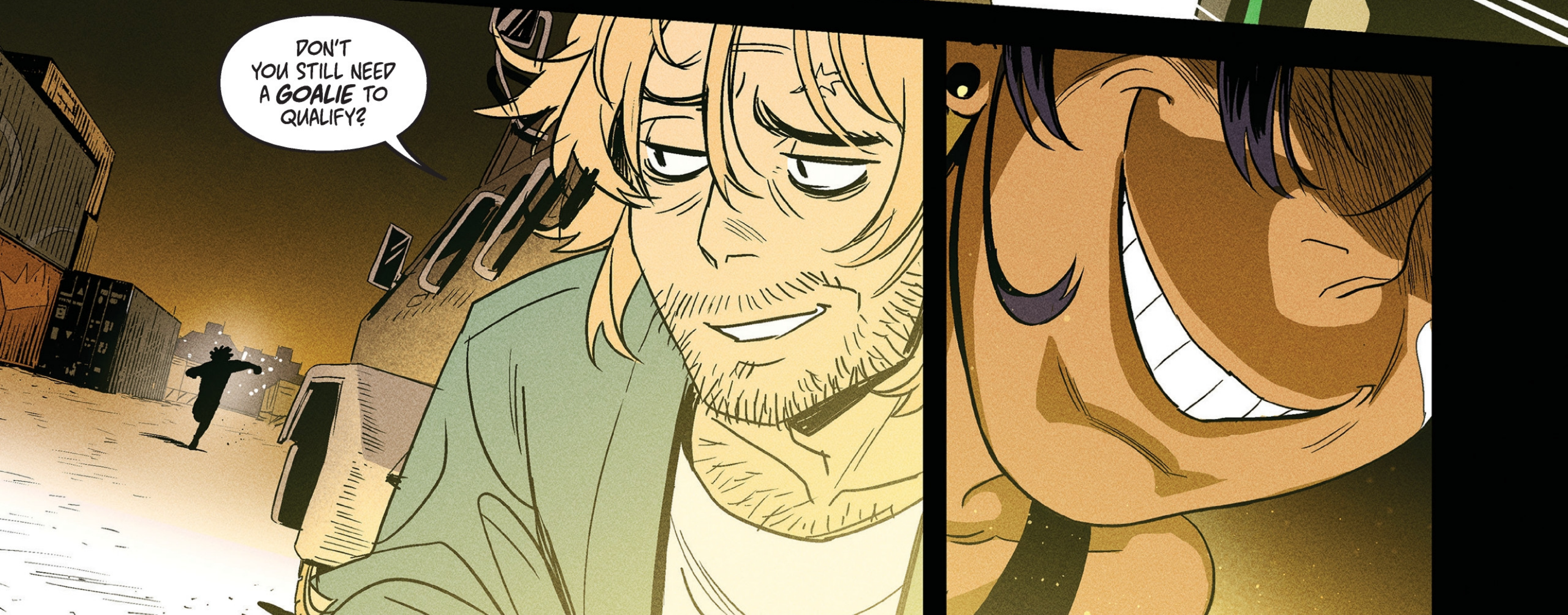


EVERYONE! OUR FIRST PRACTICE AS A TEAM STARTS NOW.

WE'VE NEVER PLAYED TOGETHER. AS IT STANDS, THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN WIN A REGULAR MATCH. BUT I'VE GOT A PLAN.

NEW GUY! THERE'S ONLY TEN MINUTES LEFT. GO TELL REGISTRATION WE HAVE A FULL TEAM!

DON'T YOU STILL NEED A GOALIE TO QUALIFY?





ABSOLUTLEY NOT!!!!

THIS WAS YOUR POSITION WHEN YOU PLAYED.

THIRTY YEARS AGO, YOU INSANE BABY!

EVERYONE! YOU KNOW THE PLAN.

...LET'S GO WIN.

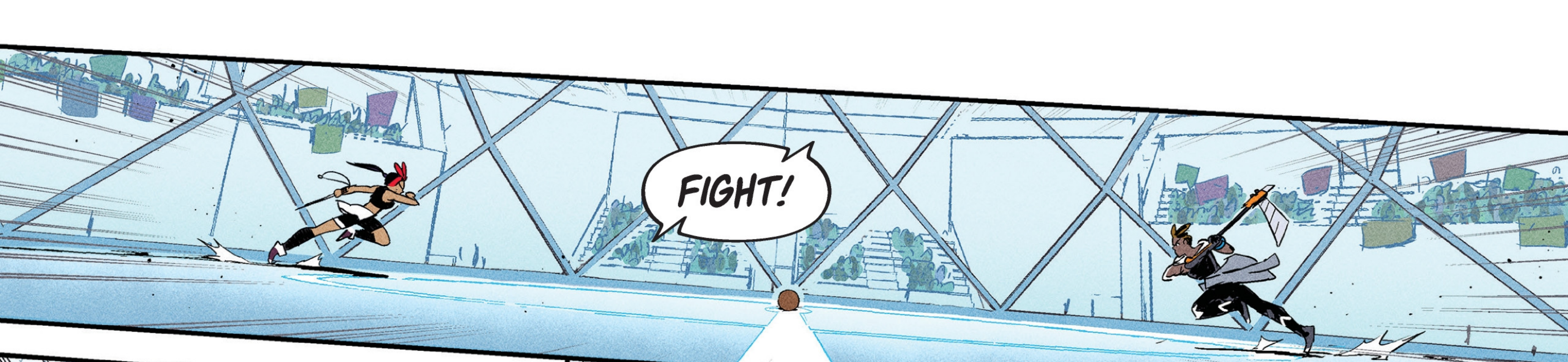
WELCOME TO THE FIRST QUALIFYING MATCH FOR QUEEN MOB'S TOURNAMENT!

Whoo! baw! baw!

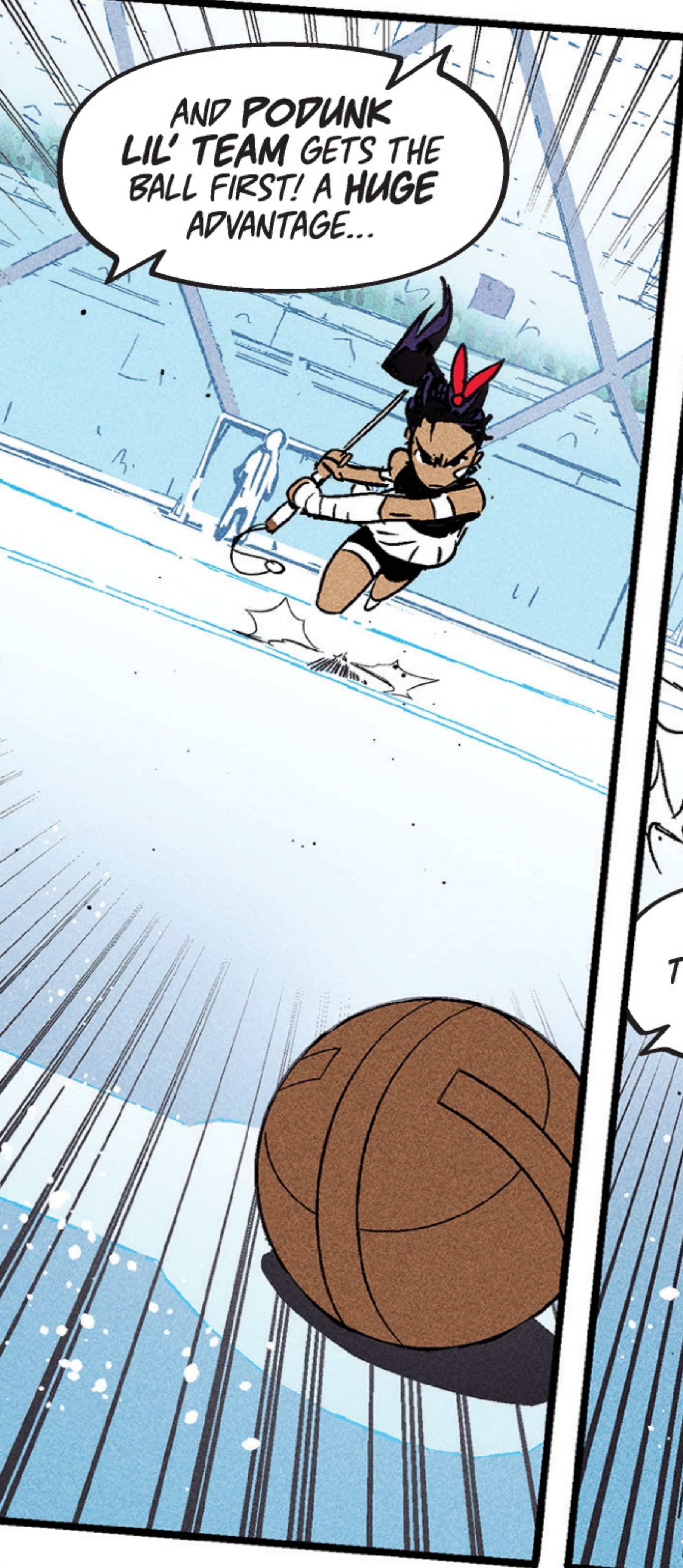
DUE TO THE SHEER VOLUME, EACH MATCH WILL BE A SHORTENED, THIRTY-MINUTE DEATH MATCH.

WHEN THE TIMER GOES OFF, THE TEAM WITH THE MOST POINTS WINS.

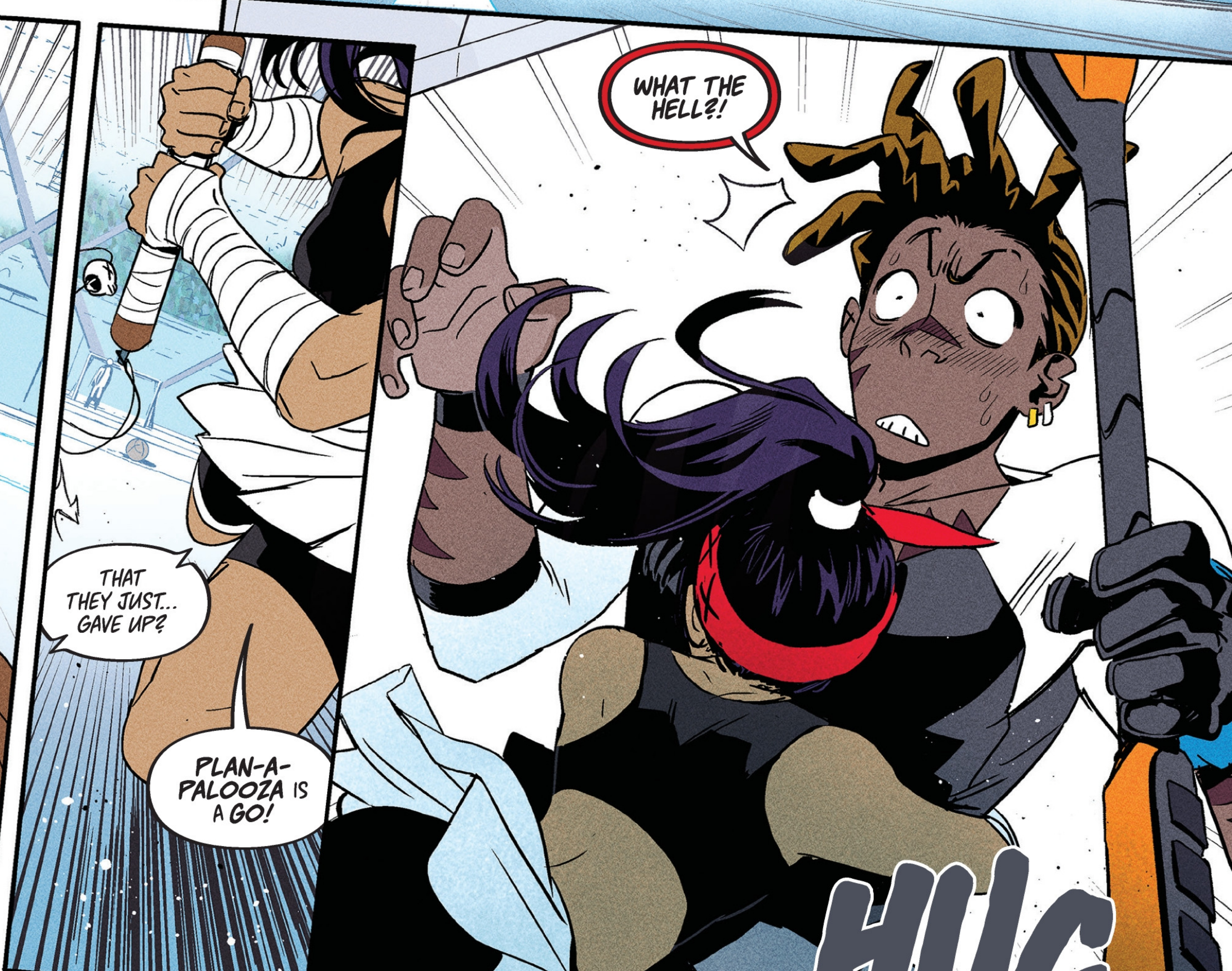
READY. SET...



FIGHT!



AND PODUNK LIL' TEAM GETS THE BALL FIRST! A HUGE ADVANTAGE...

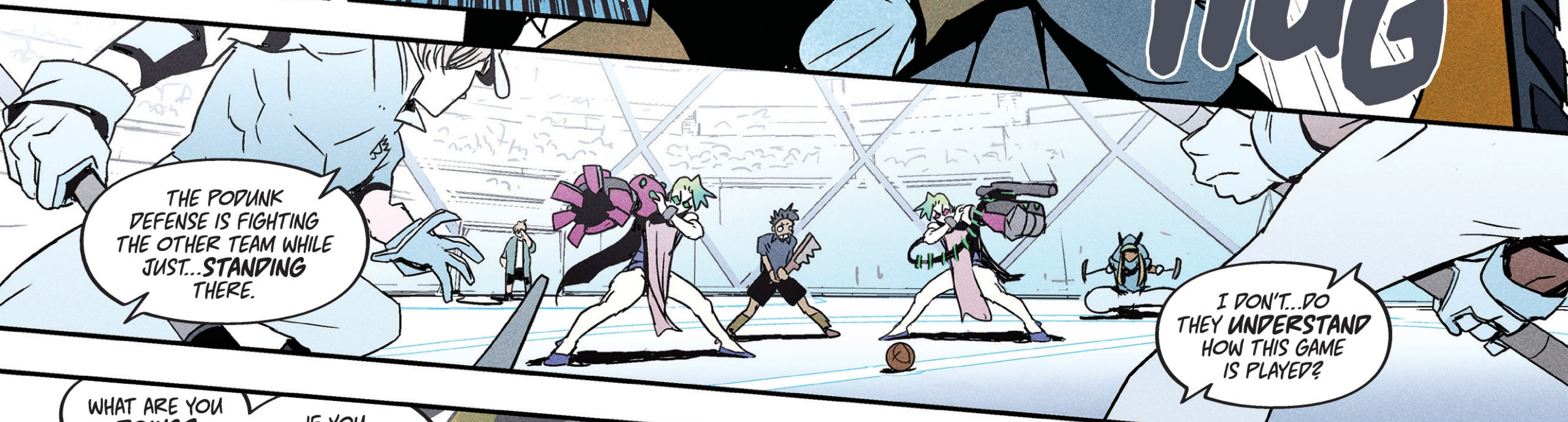


WHAT THE HELL?!

THAT THEY JUST... GAVE UP?

PLAN-A-PALOOZA IS A GO!

HUG



THE PODUNK DEFENSE IS FIGHTING THE OTHER TEAM WHILE JUST...STANDING THERE.

I DON'T...DO THEY UNDERSTAND HOW THIS GAME IS PLAYED?



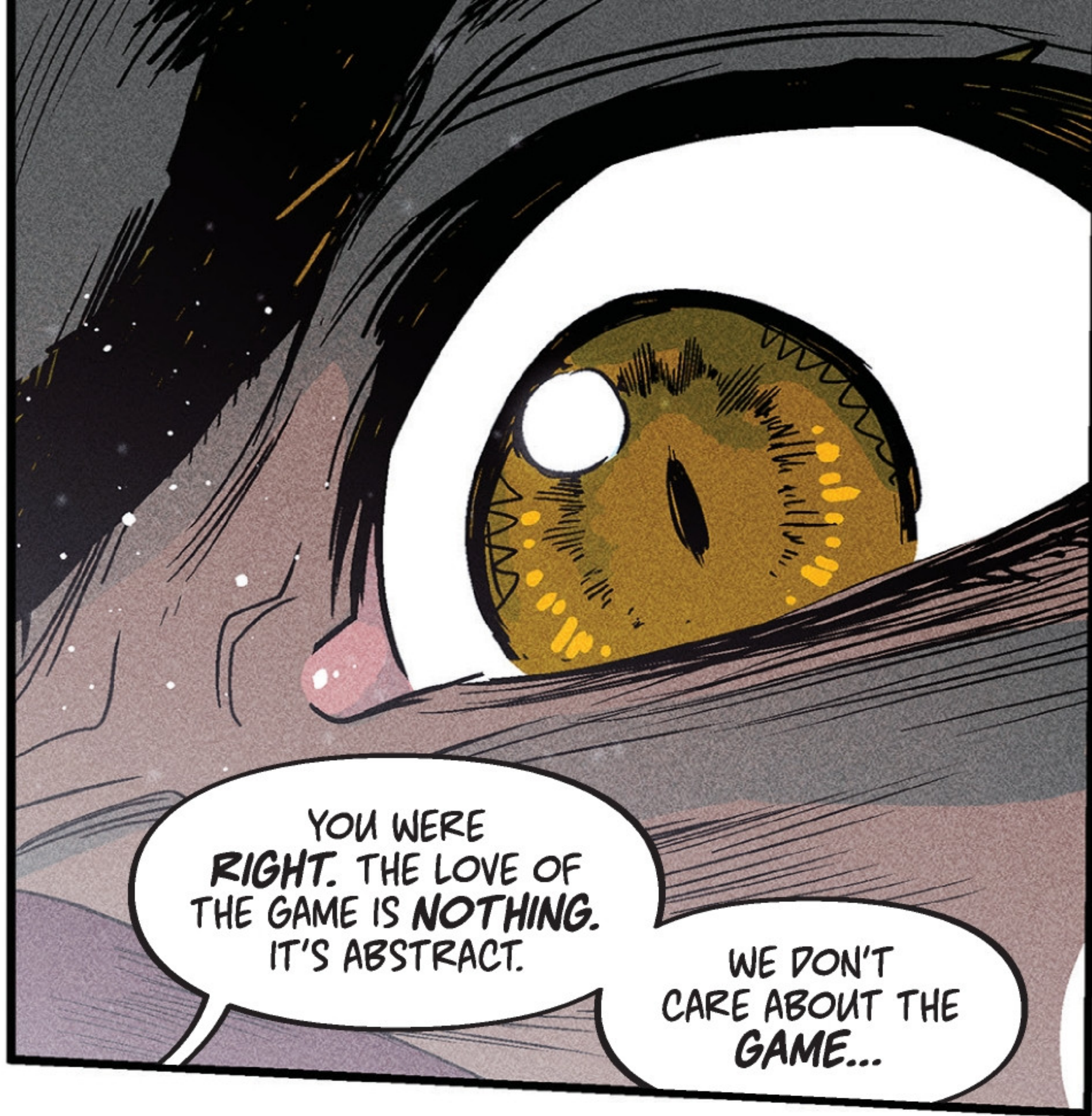
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

IF YOU THINK I WON'T USE MY CUTTER MOVE ON YOU, YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW ME!

THE CUTTER IS NOT YOUR MOVE...

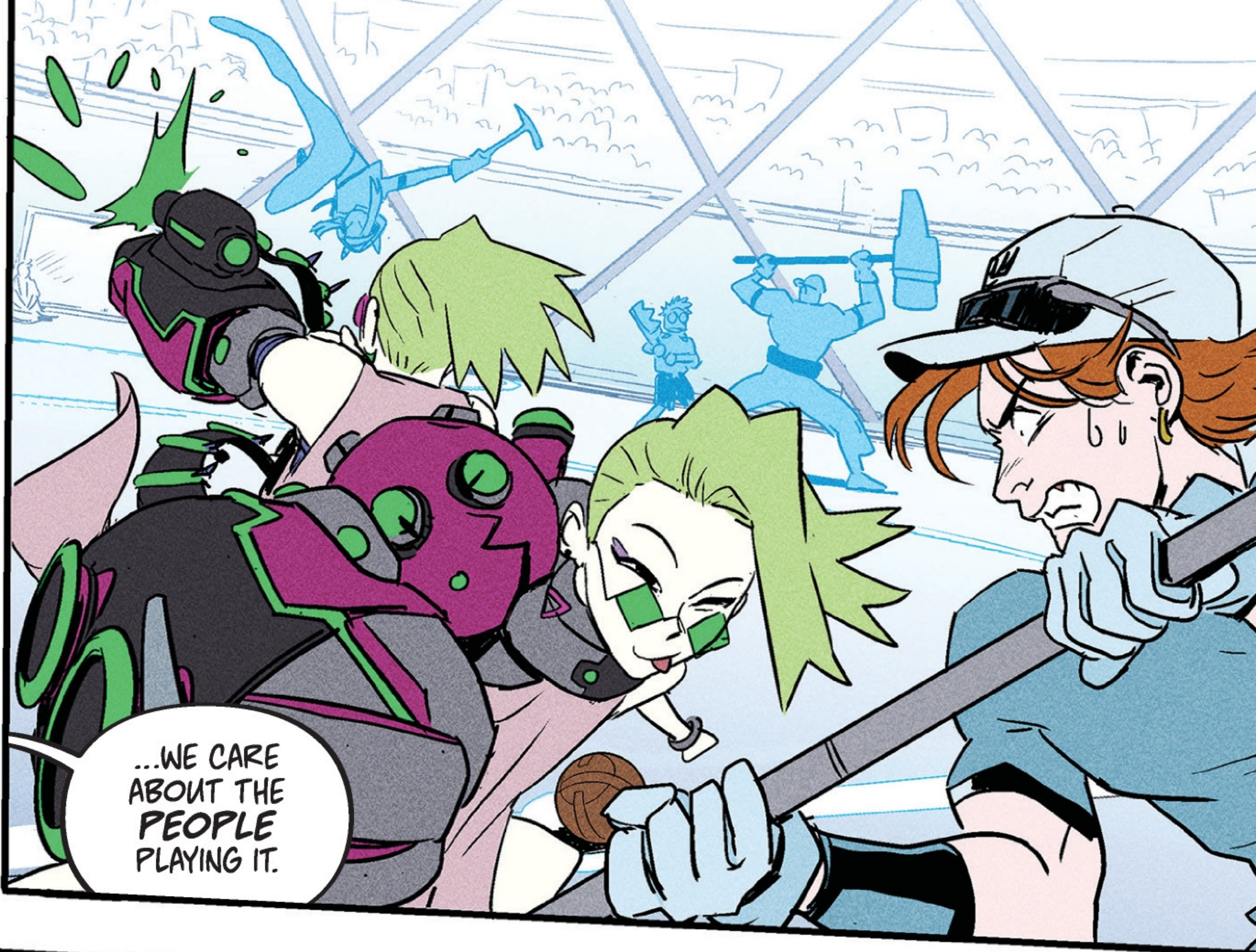


...IT WAS YOUR BROTHER'S!

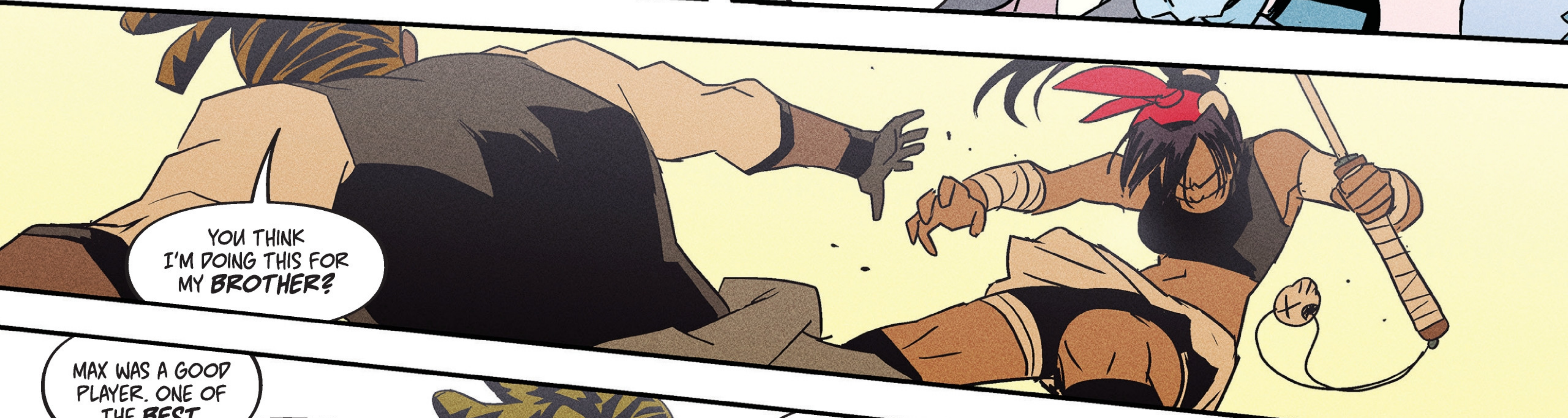


YOU WERE
RIGHT. THE LOVE OF
THE GAME IS **NOTHING**.
IT'S ABSTRACT.

WE DON'T
CARE ABOUT THE
GAME...



...WE CARE
ABOUT THE
PEOPLE
PLAYING IT.

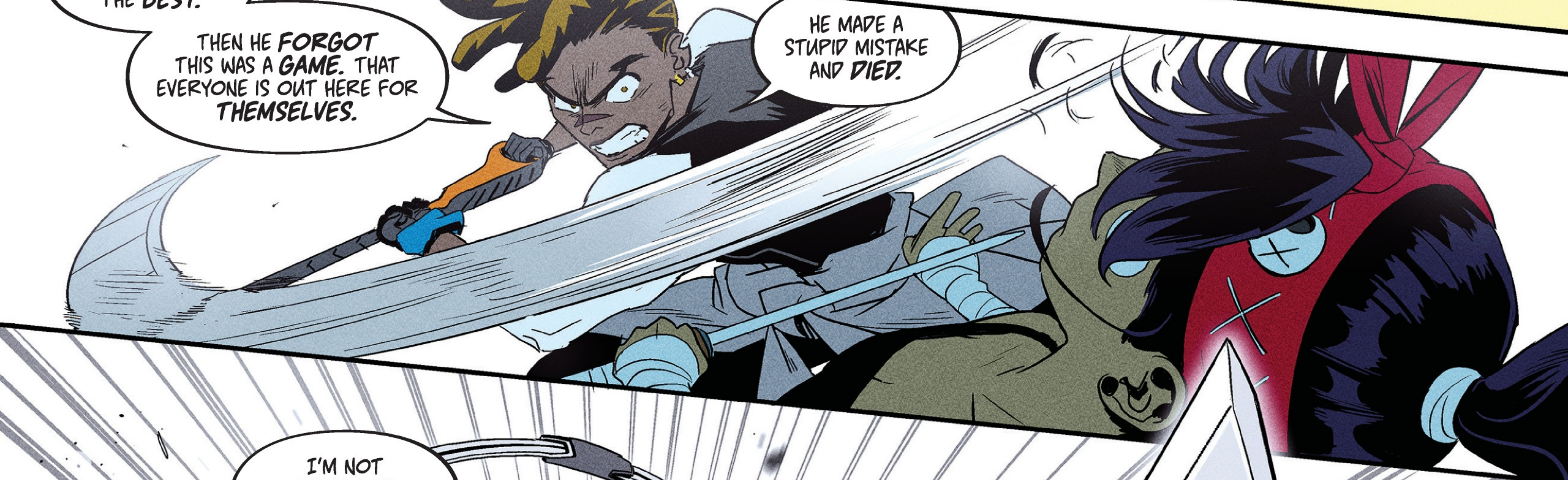


YOU THINK
I'M DOING THIS FOR
MY **BROTHER**?

MAX WAS A GOOD
PLAYER. ONE OF
THE **BEST**.

THEN HE **FORGOT**
THIS WAS A **GAME**. THAT
EVERYONE IS OUT HERE FOR
THEMSELVES.

HE MADE A
STUPID MISTAKE
AND **DIED**.



I'M NOT
DOING THIS
BECAUSE OF MY
BROTHER...

...I'M
DOING THIS
TO **SURPASS**
HIM!





GO TEAM!
YOU'RE NOT
GETTING PAST
US...YOU...

YOUUUUUUU

AHHHH!

GRAARRGGH!

ROOOOOOAR!

PODUNK'S
SECOND STRIKER HAS
TRANSFORMED INTO A SUPER
MUTANT! AND HE'S RAPIDLY
PASSING THE INFECTION ON
TO THE OTHER
TEAM!



BECOMING
A MUTANT DOES NOT
MEAN THE PERSON IS DEAD. SO
NO POINTS FOR EITHER
TEAM.

RAAAAHAAH

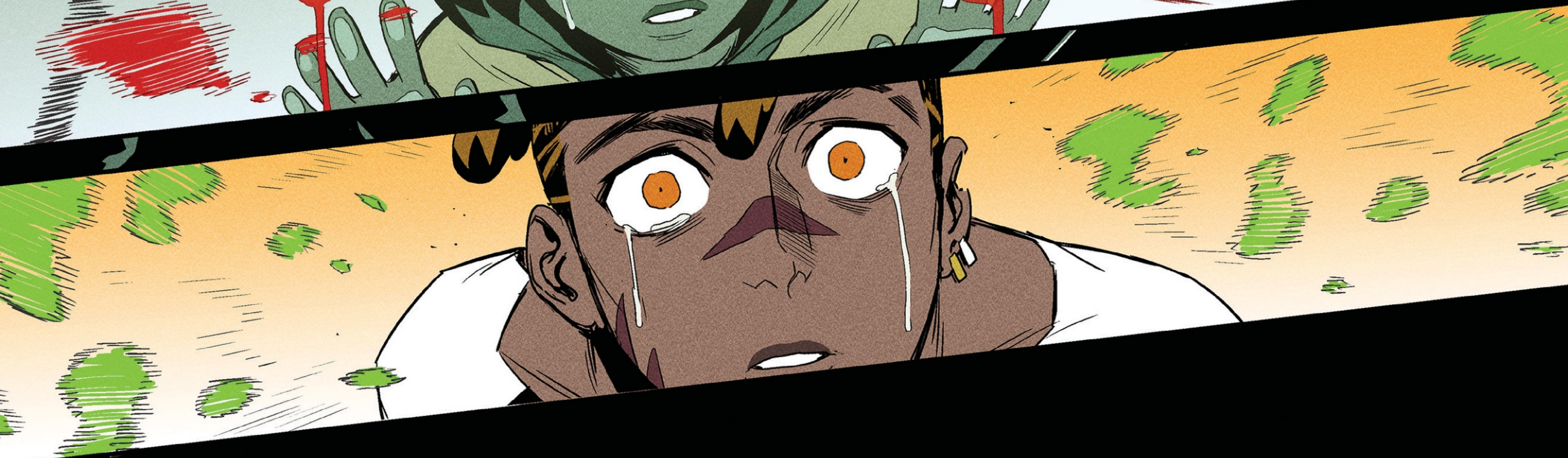
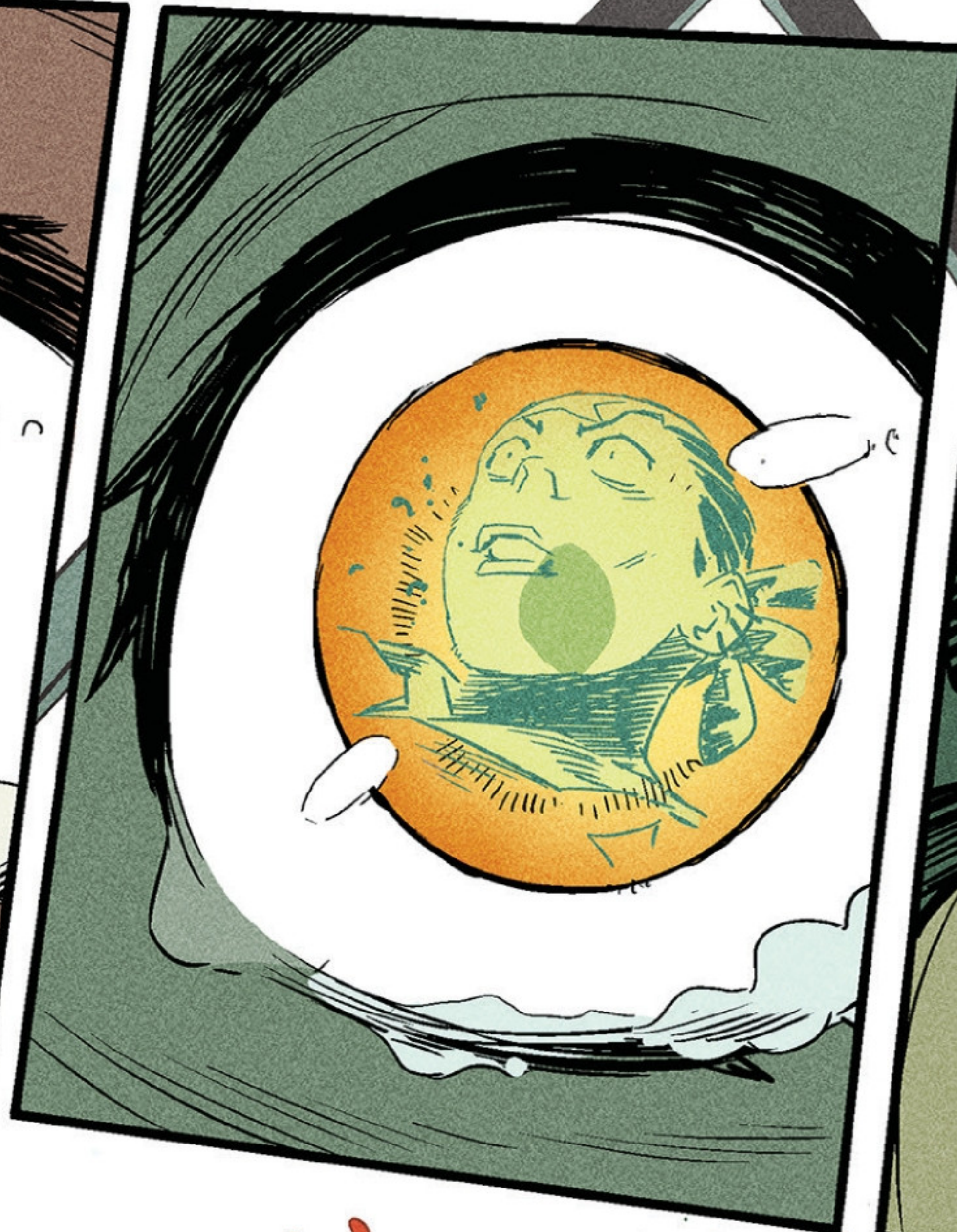
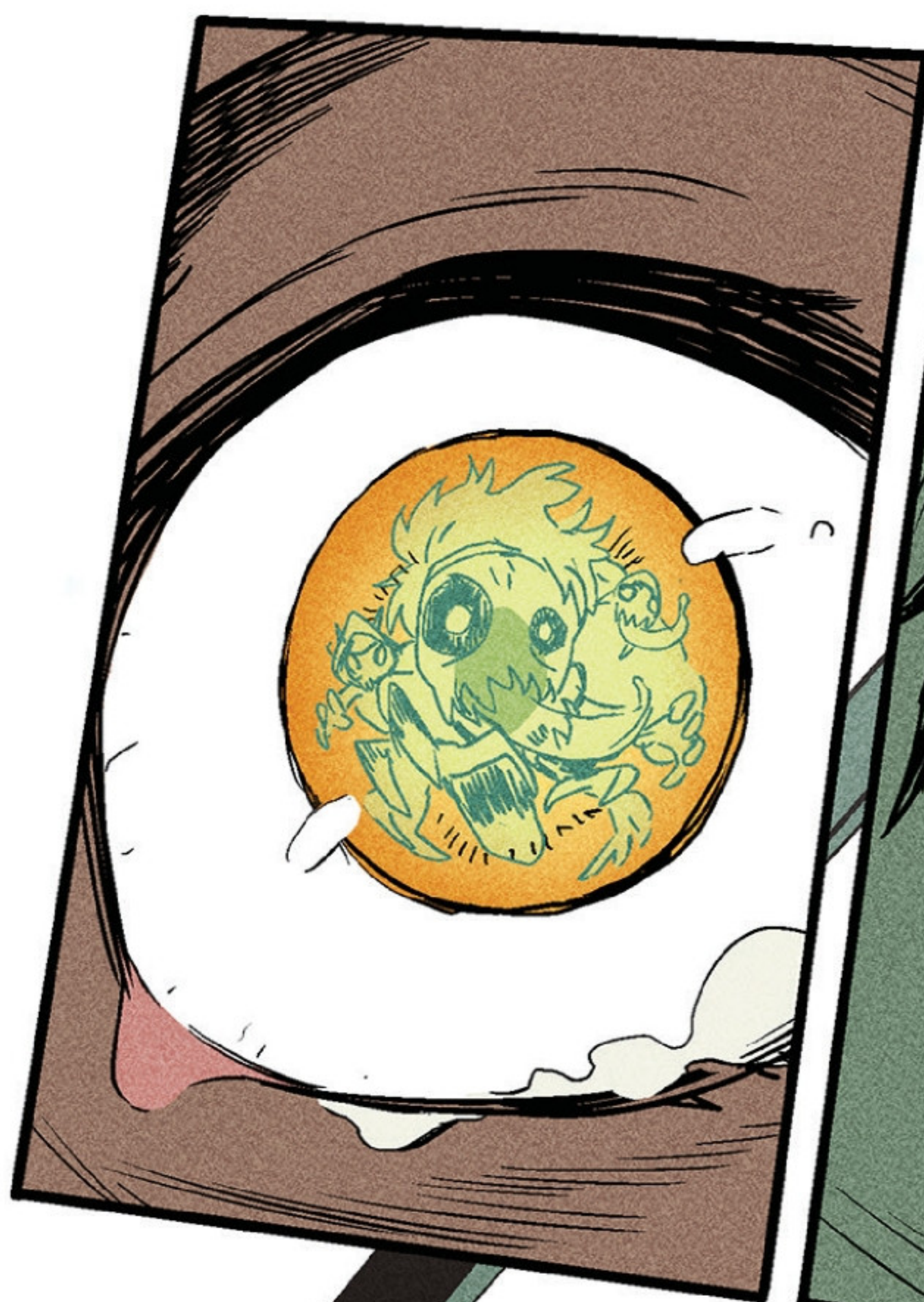
AHHHHH!
THEY'RE TRYING
TO GET ME!

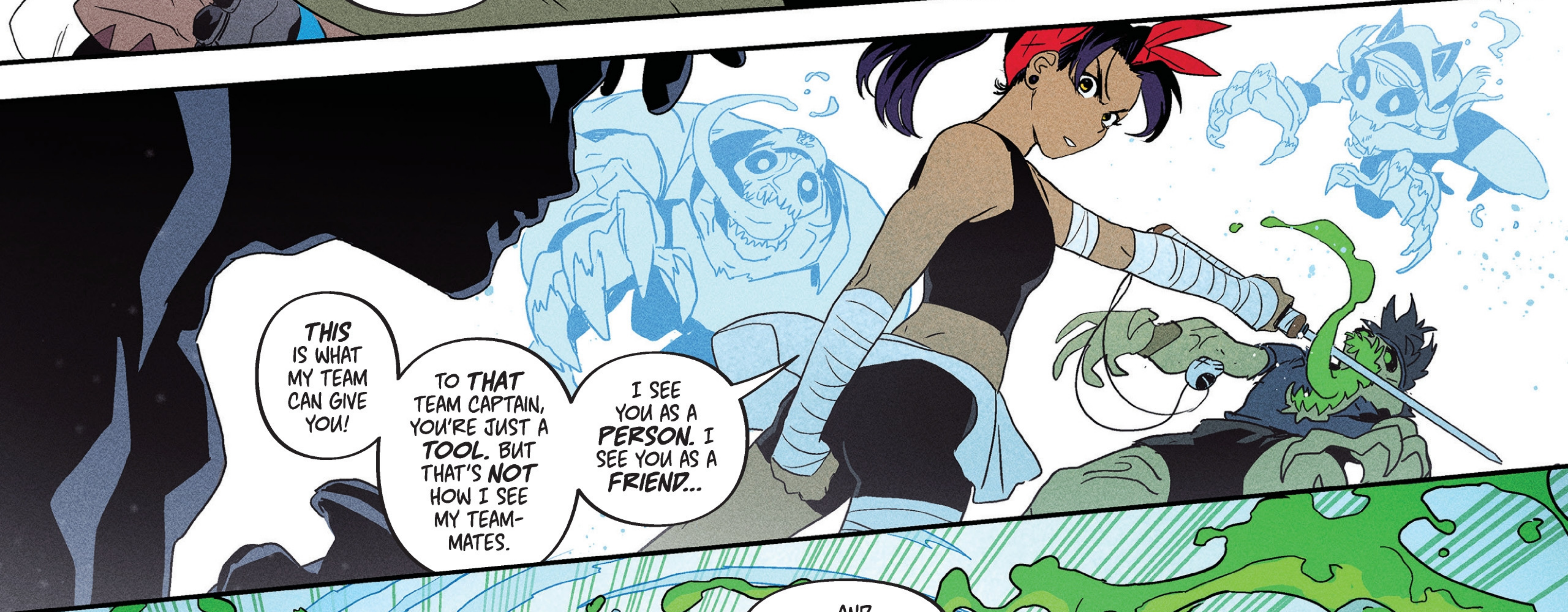
THEY'RE
TRYING TO
GET ALL OF
US, YOU
IDIOT!

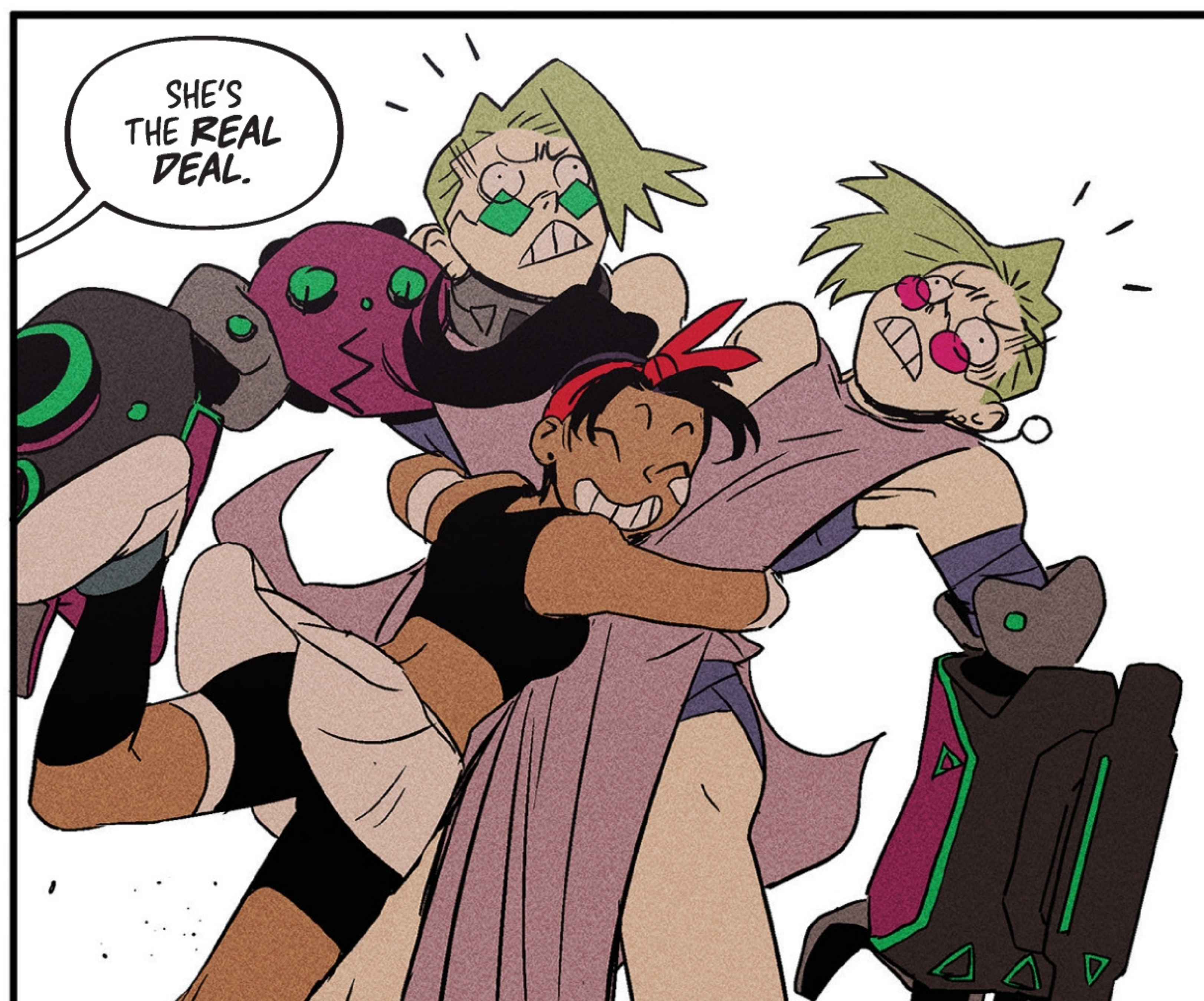
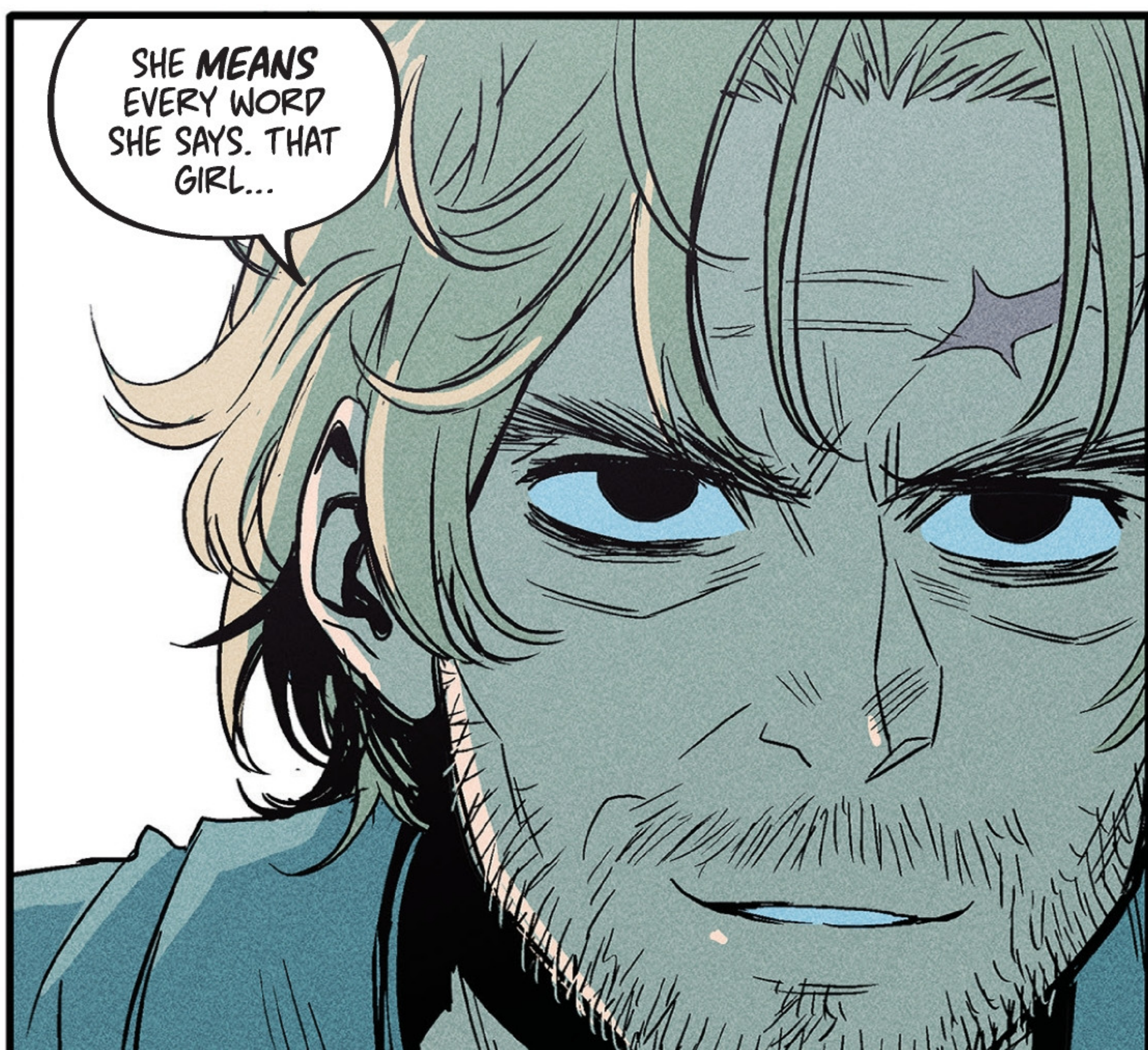
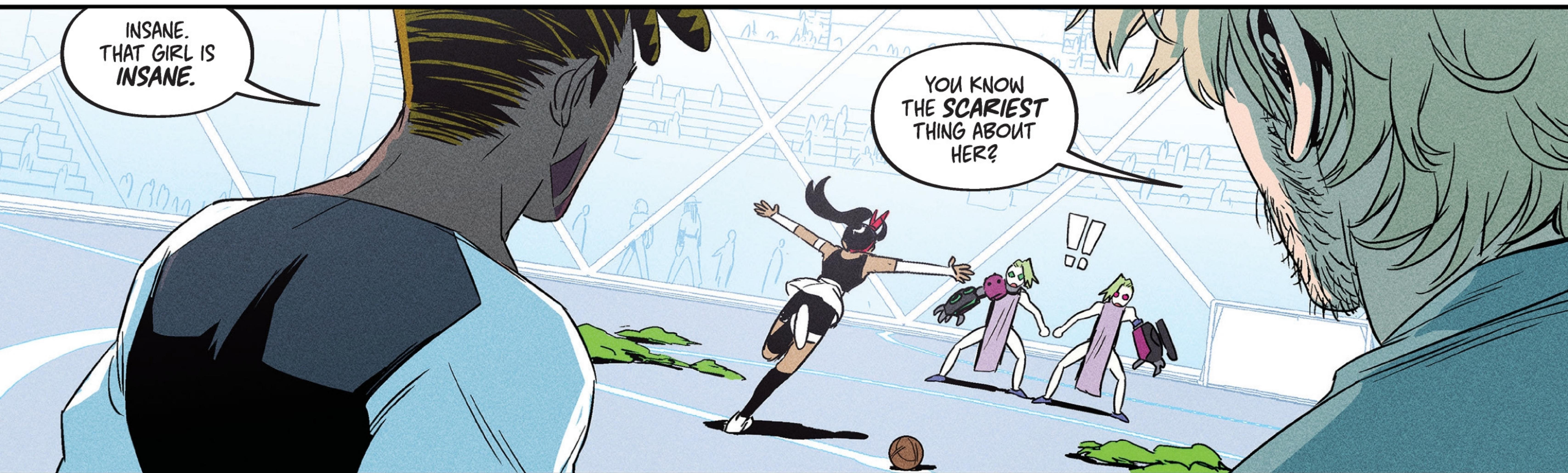
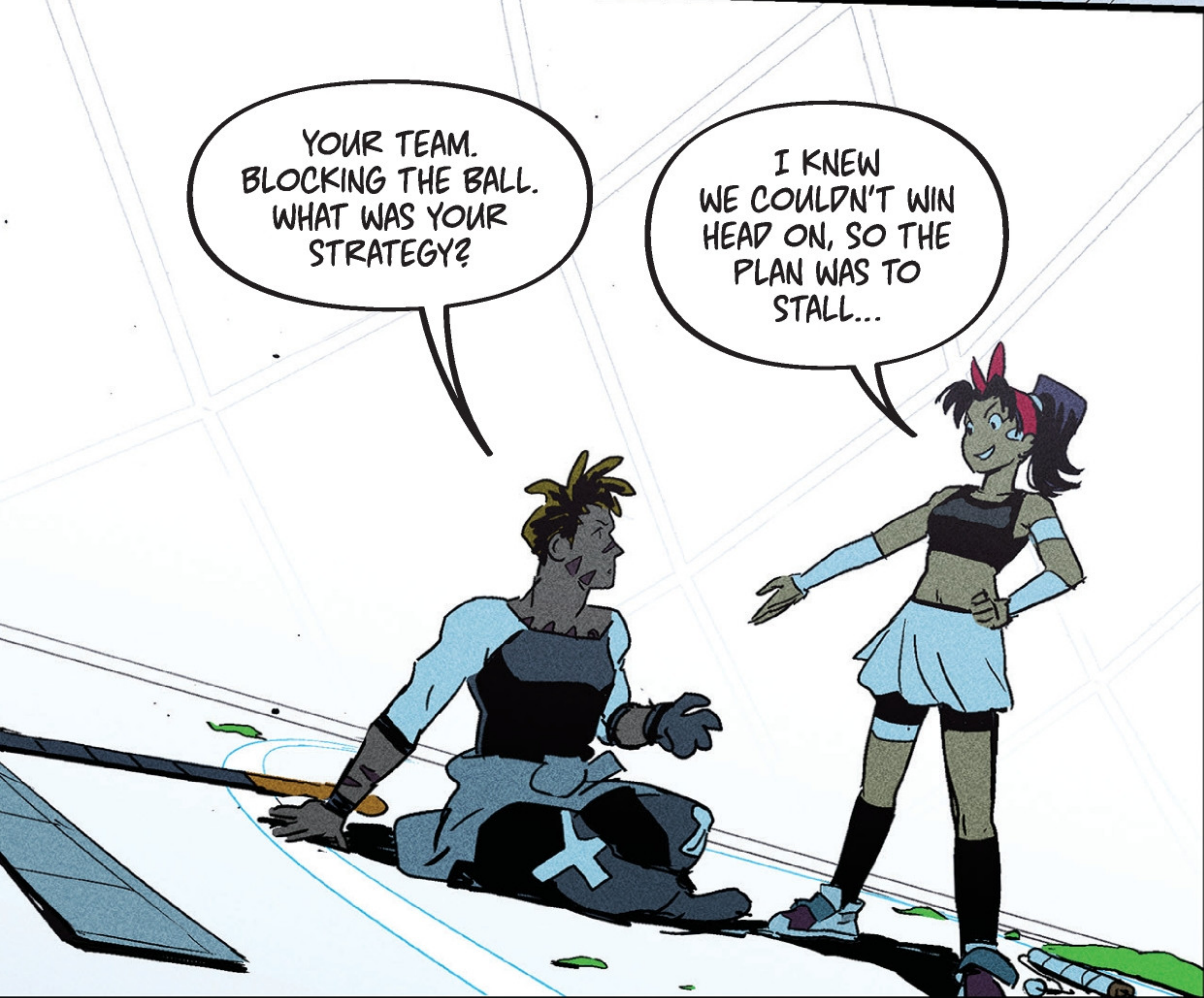
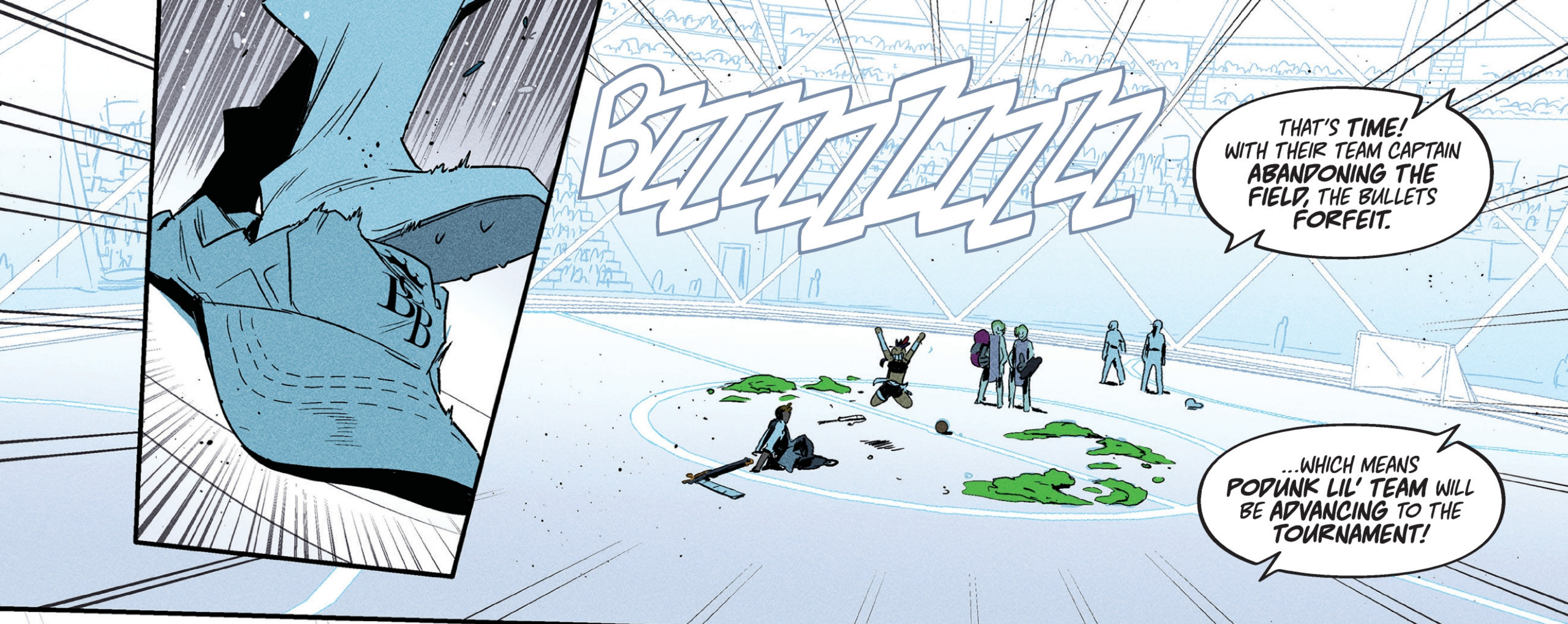
THEN
JUSTIFY
THE MONEY
I PAID
YOU...

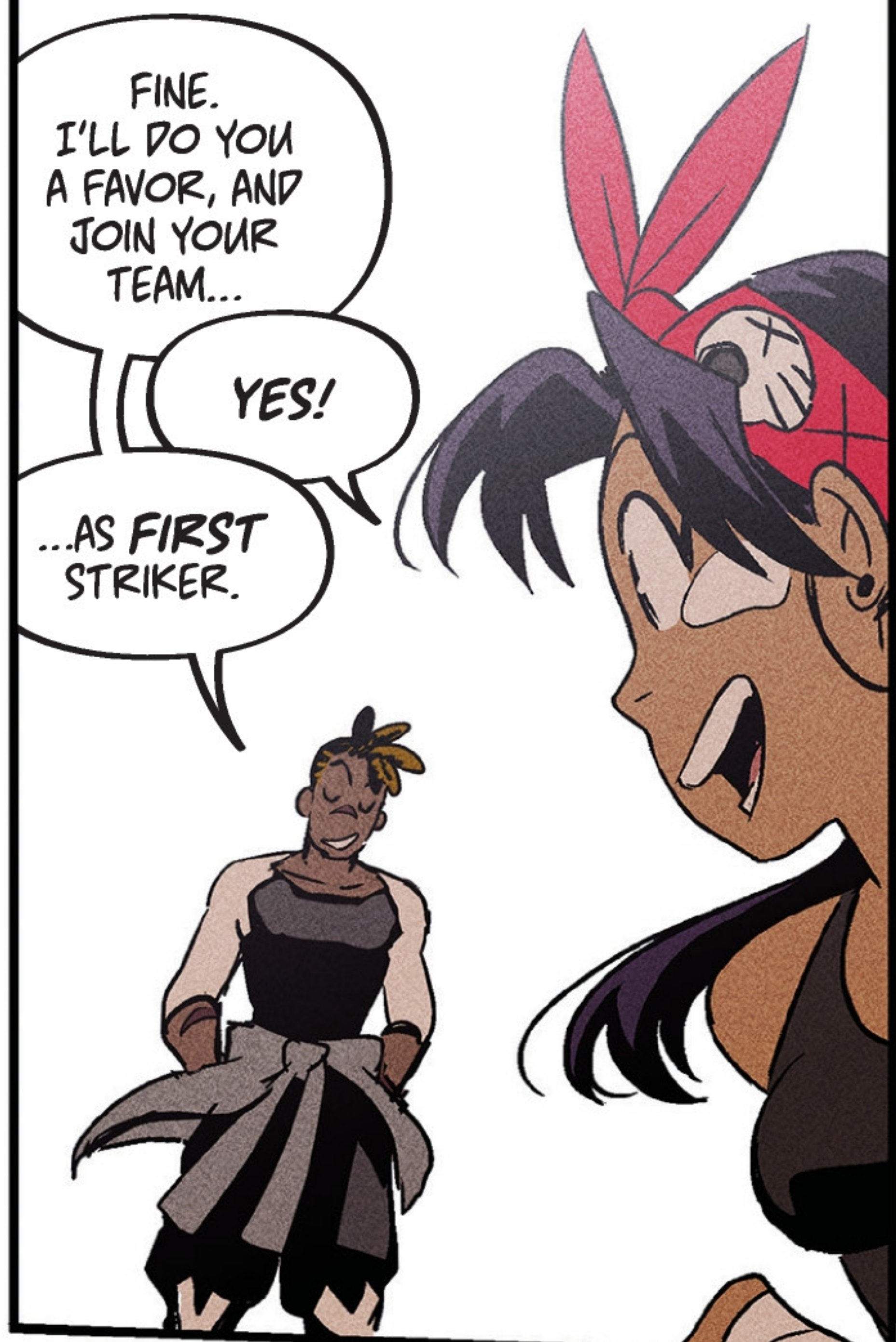
...AND
TAKE ONE
FOR THE
TEAM!











Trini moves on to the Tournament proper...but makes an ENEMY in the process!
Find out who ELSE will try to kill her in the next issue of **I HEART SKULL-CRUSHER!**

I HEART SKULL-CRUSHER! #3
ON SALE MAY 2024



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